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KEEP MOVING



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BY ALFRED C. B. FLETCHER



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TO
MY WIFE

INTRODUCTION

TO compose a statement for this posthumous publication of my brother's adventures is a sad and difficult task, but it has its compensations. The realization that my whimsical and philosophical companion of past years would thoroughly enjoy whatever I choose to write helps greatly. Furthermore, I can vividly picture his satisfaction at the publication of this book. Because this manuscript represented assiduous labor in the recountal of his travels, he naturally was hopeful that it would appear in print.

Prior to his fateful voyage, he had frequently discussed with me this, his latest literary effort, and in fact left several extra copies to be submitted to publishers in the event that his own original copy should be mislaid or lost. With him on the *Vestris*, for final correction, he carried the original of this manuscript.

Determined to see as much of this globe as possible, my brother, shortly after finishing college, accomplished a long-planned ambition by working his way around the world. Subsequently, he occupied himself in various business enterprises. Having become inoculated with the lure of foreign lands, he constantly had hopes that opportunities would again enable him to follow unfrequented paths.

For a short period after his return to the United States,

he seemingly was destined to be settled in the profit-seeking routine which prevails in this country. An opportunity to go abroad for business purposes as well as pleasure, however, was too tempting, and soon he was on his way to the series of events that are described in this volume. His flair for unearthing the unusual, coupled with his unconventional attitude towards life, made it inevitable that his experiences would be interesting and amusing. It is hoped that you will find his account of them entertaining and instructive.

The incidents and events described in this volume cover generally the high lights of Alfred's activities from 1915 to 1925.

After his return to his native land, as described in the last chapter of this volume, he remained in the United States for only a short period. He was constantly on the alert for a business opportunity that would again take him abroad—and exactly where he would go did not matter much to him or to his devoted wife. Fortunately she, too, found the doctrine of "Keep Moving" entirely congenial, and was ready at any time to follow with him the "trail that is always new." It was not surprising to my brother's family and friends, therefore, to learn that the travellers were again bound for alien lands.

Alfred had long been anxious to see something of the Southern Hemisphere, so was delighted to accept the offer of an international bank to represent its interests in Salvador. After an interesting stay in Central America, he returned to the United States to discuss a possible transfer to Guatemala.

When in New York, he had occasion to meet an old acquaintance who was in charge of the foreign activities of an important manufacturing company. The result of this interview and of subsequent meetings was the acceptance by my brother of an offer to represent this company on the east coast of South America. This assignment was most attractive to him, and he looked forward eagerly to the prospect of viewing still another part of the world under most happy and congenial circumstances.

After the requisite period of training in this country, which incidentally added to his knowledge of his native land—for he covered many states in pursuit of information—Alfred, accompanied by Antoinette, his wife, left for his new post. An assured future seemed to lay ahead, and he embarked on this new adventure filled with hope and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the *Vestris* was his vehicle of transportation.

The fate of the *Vestris* is well known. Alfred and Antoinette were not among the few passengers who, along with most of the negro crew, constituted the list of survivors. By inquiry it was learned that together they were lowered from the sodden, water-soaked *Vestris* into life-boat number eight, a minute or so before the steamer sank. Newspaper accounts of this unprecedented sea disaster mentioned often this particularly unseaworthy lifeboat, patched with tin, which, with its overload of approximately seventy occupants, frequently capsized. Each time it was righted, its passengers were fewer in number. Eventually it was impossible to turn it over, and only a few were left clinging to its side. Alfred and Antoinette, both good swimmers, were among this group.

From another of the group, who was saved by swimming to a passing boat filled with crew, we learn that both of them were brave and courageous, and were continually trying to encourage their companions. Alfred characterized the episode as a "lark" and vouchsafed that it was a "fine day for a swim." Their companion on the wreckage, who struck out for the boat and was saved, was sent on his way with encouragement, and was adjured by Antoinette to come back for them if he made it. He did return with the crew but—the sun had set, and his search was in vain.

Thus did old "A.C.B.," "Al," or "Luke," as he was familiarly called by many, terminate his last adventure on this globe. Gentle and trustful, yet self reliant; whimsical, loyal, and perennially happy—his friends were legion. In all his life, no one suffered injury because of him, but many were better because of knowing him. He led his own life. Even though short, it was full to overflowing.

Though his family and friends will never cease missing him, I am sure that he is satisfied and content wherever he is.

J. D. FLETCHER.

FOREWORD

In *From Job to Job Around the World* I gave an account of a tramp trip I made in my early twenties. The present volume is a brief record of some of my later travels made at a time when economy was less of a necessity and when a reasonable amount of comfort was obtainable. Happily, however, I have thus far evaded, with few exceptions, the misfortune of travelling in common luxury; and my various peregrinations, although often on the more or less beaten paths, have been devoid to a pleasing degree of the uniform features of the average conventional tourist.

ALFRED C. B. FLETCHER.

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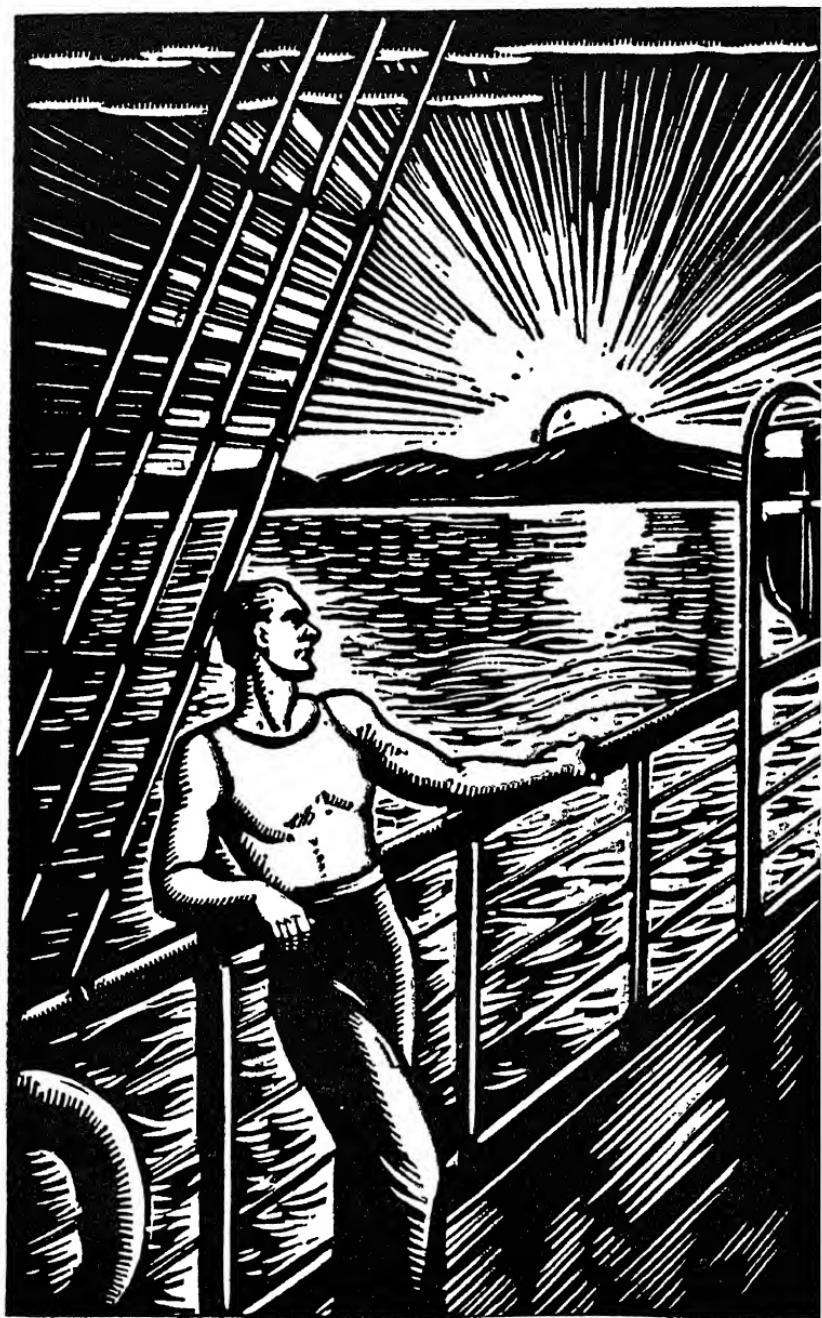


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CHAPTER I

ENGLISH EXPERIENCES

KEEP MOVING" was the abridged advice given me by a friend, an inveterate traveller, on the occasion of my graduation from college. With this pithy slogan as a stimulus, I set out in August, 1909, with a fixed determination to see the world, despite the meager proportions of my mundane possessions. For three years I travelled, either in the steerage or working for my passage, obtained jobs in odd corners of the earth to replenish my chronically depleted pocket-book, rose in several instances to heights of modest dignity in the positions I held, and at other times sank to the deplorable depths of an outcast in search of a means of support.

Thus, as an indigent but self-respecting tramp, I girdled the globe, skirted the equator, shivered in the shadow of the North Pole and returned to the United States with the conquest of much of Europe and Asia to my credit.

Upon the completion of my first journey around the world, my days as a vagabond came to an end. I had no intention, however, of disregarding the counsel of my friend but I resolved that my future peregrinations should be characterized by reasonable comfort and sanitary conditions. I, therefore, concluded to abandon the route of water-front hotels, ships' "focs'ls," and odd jobs ashore. Although I still had an abhorrence of first-class tourist resorts, gilded cabins, and sight-seeing busses, I decided to forsake the ways of a tramp and to become a traveller but not a tourist.

I agree with Bernard Shaw's dislike of feeling at home when abroad. I enjoy American luxuries and facilities in the United States, but I am little interested in them when in foreign lands except as necessities and as safe-

guards to a healthy constitution. The universal pursuit of Occidental comforts on the part of the conventional tourist is distasteful to me. I endeavor to mingle with the natives as far as my ignorance of their language and local conditions will permit. I like to stay at their hotels, eat their food, participate in their practices, and come in contact with their home life in spite of the probability that a little dirt and some discomfort may be encountered.

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Emerson, in his essay on Self-Reliance, has written that travelling is a Fool's Paradise. Bacon, on the other hand, stated that travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience. When two such sages disagree, I am content to be a fool and take my experience in Paradise.

At any rate, I was once more on the move. I was outward bound from New York on the S.S. *Rotterdam*, sharing a comfortable but moderate-priced cabin with an agreeable fellow-passenger. London was my destination. This was the extent of my itinerary, and I little knew how long I was destined to be away from the United States or to what countries my travels would eventually lead me.

I disembarked at Southampton and went directly to London, arriving about midnight at Victoria Station. I climbed out of my train, pushed my way through a phalanx of human beings and hotel hawkers and reached the curb, where I stood bewildered at the maze of surging busses and taxicabs in front of me. I had visited the British metropolis several years before, but my recollection of its streets and landmarks was now only a hazy

jumble in my dizzy brain. I had made no hotel reservations, and I was as helpless as a babe in a jungle, not knowing where to turn next.

After a minute's reflection, I picked up my bag, which contained my entire travelling kit, and trudged up the street in search of a place to sleep. I dropped into the Grosvenor Hotel, only to be informed that there were no vacant rooms. I then moved on to the Rubens and was brusquely told that it, also, was full to the roof. I tried several others, only to hear the same disheartening news. I learned that London was packed with visitors and that my prospects for a night's lodging were nil.

The hour was approaching one o'clock and, with the probability of pacing the city's streets until dawn, I hailed a policeman and inquired where I could find some small, cheap hotels in the vicinity. He directed me to a secluded section behind Victoria Station. Here I found a nest of dingy-looking edifices, the proprietor of each of which I decided to arouse in turn until I found a place to lay my head.

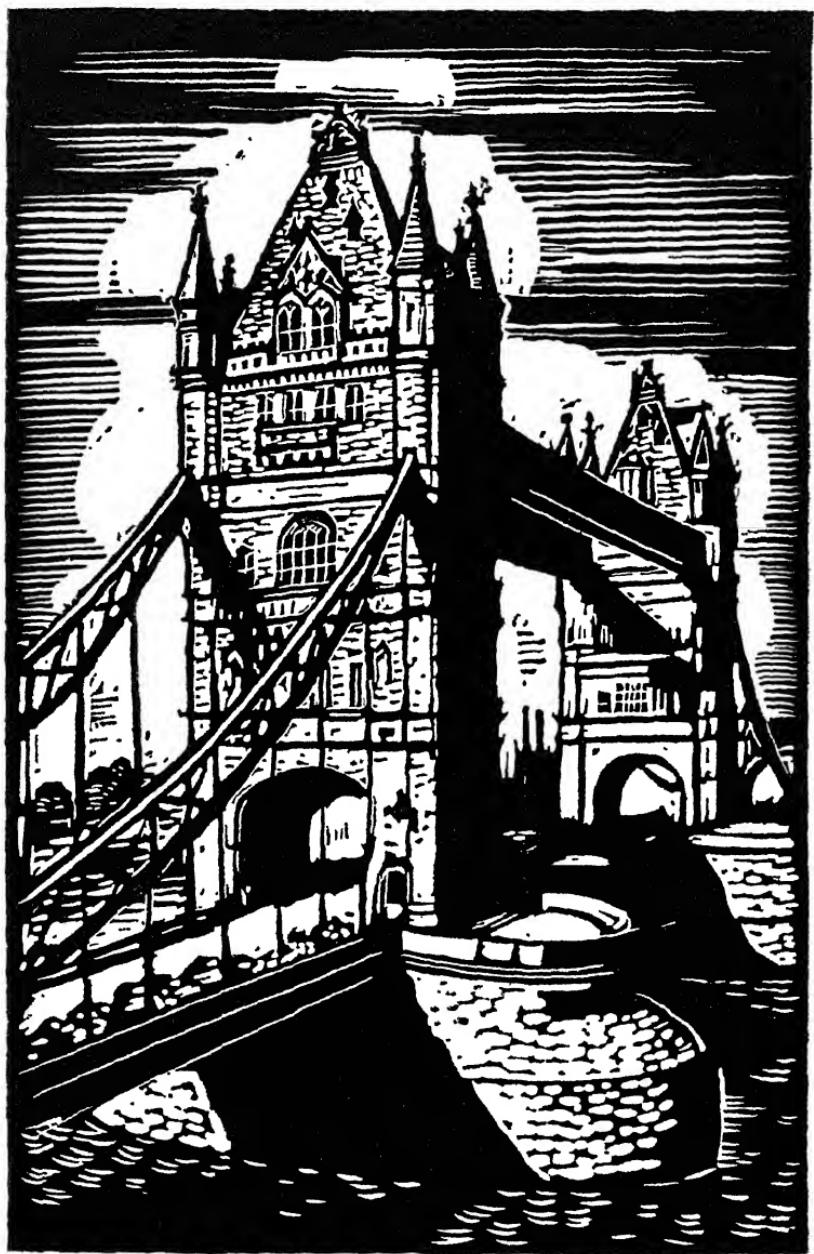
The first two hostgeries were overflowing with humanity, but in the third I was promised accommodation in the dining room provided I was willing to arise at six o'clock in order to make way for the serving of breakfast. I immediately agreed, but was somewhat dismayed, on being ushered into my temporary abode, to find the room lined with somnolent figures. In the dim light, I carefully picked my way between the recumbent human beings sprawled about the floor like a heap of drunken unfortunates, and reached the dining table upon which I was to recline until sunrise. I was soon stretched out ready

for a few hours' rest, I thought. This hope, however, was blasted, for a chap with a particularly sonorous snore was asleep directly beneath my table. He proved to be as disturbing as an intermittent alarm clock.

In the gray London morning, the dining room presented a dreary scene as the weary lodgers yawned, rubbed their eyes, and arose to shuffle out into the hall before the arrival of the advance guards of the initial meal of the day. Most of the guests were upcountry Englishmen with assorted accents, and the ascending chorus of disgust sounded like a muffled college yell. We were soon served a copious breakfast of porridge, bacon and eggs, marmalade, and tea, and after paying the proprietor seven shillings, I departed from the hotel—if such it could be called—resolved to find a less thickly-populated room for the remainder of my stay in London.

I jumped on a bus at Victoria Station and started on my way to Cheapside, refreshing my mind *en route* with scenes I had read about from childhood and with which I had become somewhat familiar during my previous sojourn. What a thrill one has when riding on the top of a London bus, as it bumps and jerks along the crowded winding streets of the great city! The nipping fog immediately revived my weary spirits, and the memory of the dingy hotel was instantly dissipated as I twisted my head in every direction, like a ventriloquist's dummy, in order to miss nothing along the way.

The great silent Abbey, that sacred tomb of Anglo-Saxon Christendom, with little Saint Margaret's snugly nestled under its protecting wing, was the first familiar sight. I caught a glimpse of the Houses of Parliament



and the misty Thames as we crossed the huge square. In a few minutes, Trafalgar Square lay before us in imposing stateliness, with the figure of Nelson topping the pinnacle of its lofty column. The National Gallery and Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields were lost to view as the cumbersome bus dived into the active and crowded Strand. We glided by Charing Cross, dodged taxicabs, missed a couple of churches located in the middle of the thoroughfare, and came to Fleet Street—narrow enough in places to be characterized as a lane and winding like the country road it once was when it served as the connecting artery between London and Westminster. Occasionally I saw a quaint old English building, but most of the black sooty structures lining this street would be an eyesore if transplanted to an exclusive residential section. Crowded together in their natural environment, however, they possess a great charm typical of London.

The route led us to Saint Paul's, the premier Western church of non-papal Christianity, and the very heart and soul of Britain's far-flung empire. This great cathedral, with its tremendous dome and solid towers, is not only a monument to Sir Christopher Wren but a symbol of the stability of the British people throughout the world. Soon that rock of finance, the Bank of England, was crouching in the murk beside our course. When a youth, I had pictured a magnificent building as the home of the world's greatest fiscal institution, and no one but myself knows the sudden and bitter disappointment I experienced when I first gazed upon an insignificant, one-story structure hardly as pretentious as a warehouse in the Middle West.

I have passed the Bank of England many times since,

but I remember most distinctly that first view of the famous edifice, for the circumstances which led up to it were somewhat unusual. Three years before two friends of mine started out from San Francisco in opposite directions—one via New York and the other via the Orient—to work their passages around the world, making an agreement to meet at three o'clock on the afternoon of April first three years later, in front of the Bank of England. I happened to be in London at that time and, recalling the agreement of three years before, I decided to surprise my friends by joining them at the bank on the appointed day. I was on hand promptly at three o'clock. My friends were not there. I thought that they might be a little late, and I waited sufficiently long to allow for delays of trains from Liverpool or steamers from the continent. Finally I left, disappointed. Perhaps I was the dupe of an April Fool's joke! Many months later, I learned that the one who had started by way of the Orient had given up in disgust after a few weeks and returned to America. The other travelled as far as Saint Louis where he obtained a position, and there he has remained ever since!

The London bus continued on its way, and as it swung into Cheapside, I alighted and asked a policeman to direct me to King Street, an ancient and little-frequented lane in an obscure part of the city.

"Take the first turn to the right, then to the left, right, left, right, left, right, left, and you will find yourself on King Street," he replied without a second's hesitation. I looked as intelligent as a bowl of soup.

"Can you remember all that?" he politely inquired.

"I have forgotten it already," I answered.

"Listen carefully," he said, and he repeated the directions slowly as I counted on my fingers the number of turns I was to make.

His instructions led me from one narrow way to another until I came to King Street, literally smothered and lost in the heart of the great city. Only a London policeman could have so courteously snapped out such information, and I am sure that he would have been as rapid and as accurate in locating any other street in his district for a befogged traveller. I doubt if many New York traffic officers could so efficiently give instructions regarding the whereabouts of Central Park.

I was looking for number eleven. It proved to be a small two-story building, buried in the center of ancient London, and, if appearances indicated anything, it was a survivor of the Great Fire. I stood a minute to examine the quaint old house, and then I rang the doorbell, the sound of which reverberated through the venerable edifice like an echo in a canyon.

"Hello, you old blighter, 'ow did you get here? Come in. I am jolly glad to see you."

It was my old friend, Hamilton. I had met him years before in Paris and had promised to look him up the first time I came to London.

Hamilton was a thoroughbred cockney, proudly boastful of the fact that he was born within the sound of the bells of the Church of Saint Mary-le-Bow. He had travelled extensively, was well educated and spoke good English, although with an occasional disregard of "*h's*" in moments of stress—a fact in which he gloried, for he

wanted all the world to know that he was a native of the City of London. His father, now a man of eighty, had been famous in his day as one of England's leading pugilists and, according to his son, had defeated all comers of his class when in his prime. In those days, the business of a prize fighter was on the same lucrative plane as the vocation of a janitor is at the present time. A contest endured for forty or fifty rounds, and the poor battered boxers were fortunate if they receive ten pounds for a two-hour fray. In consequence, Mr. Hamilton, senior, in spite of the many battles he had weathered, was a poor man.

Although proud of his father's record and possessing the necessary physical attributes, Hamilton, junior, had decided in his youth not to follow the parental vocation, except in an amateur way. His energies were largely devoted to music, and he had acquired considerable fame as a pianist. He had spent several years in Paris as a student at a conservatory, and it was during that period that I made his acquaintance and enjoyed many musical evenings with him. As a result of his long residence in France, his French was so perfect that educated Parisians were unable to detect a flaw in his accent. Although music was Hamilton's life, I usually referred to him as "the pugilist," a designation he always received with a smile.

Our greetings over, my friend suggested that we celebrate by having a musical evening, as formerly, and I eagerly agreed. My first interest, however, was to find a place in which to stay while in London, and under his cheerful guidance, my few belongings were installed

before nightfall in a dignified boarding house on Russell Square, inhabited by elderly English couples. It was sufficiently centrally located to enable me to radiate conveniently to all points of the city.

That night, as a guest at Hamilton's house, I ate a typical English meal consisting of cold mutton, boiled potatoes, vegetable marrow, cheese, and tea. Like many tables in England, my host's had the appearance of an apothecary shop. A bottle of catsup, a pot of mustard, an old-fashioned salt-and-pepper rack, and several receptacles containing different kinds of sauces decorated the center of the board, like test tubes in a chemist's chest. The French do their seasoning in the kitchen, but the English apparently do not. On the contrary, they prefer to shake salt and pepper into everything from soup to nuts. They apply mustard lavishly and impartially. However, I enjoyed my dinner flavored only with spontaneous outbursts of cockney exuberance.

Hamilton rose from the table and went directly to the piano. It was invariably his custom to preface his selections with a brief dissertation on some incident in the lives of the composers with whose biographies he was very familiar. Before playing the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, he would state that Liszt was supreme as a pianist as well as a great composer. On beginning one of Beethoven's *Sonatas*, he would explain that, although claimed by the Belgians, the musician belonged to Germany in spite of the fact that his family came from Louvain, for he himself was born in Bonn and his grandparents and ancestors were Teutons.

As British as he was, Hamilton insisted that the Ger-

mans and those of German blood were the only people who had ever produced any music worthy of the name. He declared that the compositions of the French, Italians, and Russians were hardly more than simple melodies when compared with the Teutonic masterpieces.

Hamilton played the piano as I have seldom heard that instrument played. He had an unusual power of expression, and the execution of every selection of his repertoire was an entertainment in itself.

My second night in London was spent in a small bedroom on the top floor of the Russell Square boarding house. It was a modest, cramped compartment but I derived much comfort from the assurance that it was exclusively my own. The other guests of the place were mostly members of provincial and middle-class English families — prim, proper, conservative, and impecunious. The absence of heat, the number of dogs, and the presence of a negro boarder were the outstanding characteristics of this family hotel.

As a man of considerable leisure, Hamilton devoted much of his time to me while I was in London. One evening we dined at the Red Raven, a combination café and chophouse in the East End. It was a quaint little restaurant with heavy, bare tables and rustic chairs, colored prints upon the walls, and a large display of cold meats, relishes, and cheese on a counter at one end of the room. Hamilton had invited a number of his friends to meet me, and a dozen of us sat about the board.

I had frequently associated with Englishmen in previous years, but I little realized until this evening how much they resembled Americans in their manners and

characteristics. All these men were well acquainted, as was clearly shown by the familiar and almost brutal way in which they talked to each other. Their mode of addressing one another, often insulting, was clear evidence of their friendship and was surprisingly similar to corresponding slander which is exchanged by congenial spirits in the United States when they are on a safe footing of comradeship. The slang and technique were somewhat different, but the spirit was the same.

“You blooming bloke,” was the greeting of Hamilton to a young London banker, “I am jolly glad to see you, although I cawnt imagine why.”

“If I looked like you, I would wear a mask,” was a remark a barrister guest made to his neighbor during the meal.

“You are the lowest and most insignificant thing I can think of.” “You, you poor blistering blighter, are not worth a thought,” was a conversation I heard exchanged by two amiable diners.

It all sounded familiarly American. Imagine a group of sedate Germans or dignified Croats indulging in similar salutations!

The reserved and hard-shelled Englishman wasn’t present that evening. In fact, he is largely a myth in my experience, and I have come in contact with his Majesty’s subjects in nearly every stratum of society in the British Empire. The average Britisher is not as unconventional as a Nevada miner or a Texas ranger, but as a rule he is reasonably flexible and fairly approachable, despite the universal belief to the contrary.

With the coffee came the call of “Speech!” Hamilton

rose with great dignity and calmly surveyed his audience most deliberately. A wave of seriousness swept over the party, and there was a general shifting as the guests adjusted their chairs in anticipation of what the host was about to say. I settled myself comfortably, prepared to hear a lengthy and profound dissertation.

“Gentlemen,” the speaker began and then paused, as if carefully to choose his words.

“Cheeri-o!” he said, and sat down. It was the shortest speech I have ever heard.

The restaurant piano attracted Hamilton like a magnet, but before he had finished his second piece, his English guests had discouraged his efforts by their noise and enthusiasm for something less classical. Hamilton, however, detested jazz music and surrendered the instrument to another player who twisted out the latest syncopated hits in rapid succession until he exhausted himself and his repertoire.

One bright afternoon summoned the pugilist and me to Hyde Park, that wide expanse of green in the West End which is the loitering ground of the idle rich, the unemployed, and the disgruntled. Hundreds of persons were lying about on the great lawns killing time by gazing vaguely into space, peacefully slumbering the hours away, or chatting in groups of two or three. One end of the park has been designated as the safety valve of the city, and any man or woman with an idea, a message, or a grievance can mount a soap box and relieve his or her mind until exhausted. A speaker is free to say whatever he wishes on any subject. Criticism of the Royal Family and obscenity are the only restrictions.

This afternoon there were probably thirty spellbinders, each surrounded by a large circle of interested auditors. Hamilton and I moved from one to another, listening to the diverse words of wisdom. A gaitered bishop was exhorting his hearers to align themselves with the Church; a young man in his twenties was expounding the principles of communism and demanding the overthrow of the government; an elderly woman was vigorously advocating bone-dry prohibition for England; a Salvation Army lassie was unconvincingly shouting that it was impossible to get to heaven in a rocking chair; a professorial-looking chap was delivering an oration on Socialism; a robust gentleman was denouncing the army and navy and was preaching Pacifism; a mere slip of a woman was pleading the cause of Ireland; a turbaned youth was presenting India's case against the Empire, and an ancient-looking spinster was giving warning of the impending war of the sexes.

What an excellent example of liberty, I thought! There is more freedom of speech in England on one Saturday afternoon than there is in a month in the United States. In Hyde Park, on any week-end, one can hear tenets freely expounded which, in all probability, would cause the arrest of the speaker in many an American community.

England doesn't appear to fare so badly on account of her toleration of ideas. She is the freest nation in the world and, at the same time, one of the most law abiding. Her deportment is a marvel in contrast with the conduct of the United States. The figure of two hundred murders in England and Wales in 1923, as compared with about ten thousand for the same year in America with but

approximately double their population, is excellent testimony of Britain's good behavior. As to holdups, ours outnumber England's by four thousand to one. With these appalling ratios as evidence, a prominent American judge has publicly stated that the United States is the most lawless country in the world.

Having imbibed the urban atmosphere of London for a time, I yielded to the lure of the country. What a contrast there is between an old English village and a rural American town! I spent some time in Shipton-under-Wychwood, an ancient hamlet hoary with age, sleepy as a kitten, and as fascinating as a fairy tale. When railroads were first constructed, the staid inhabitants of this town, the beginnings of which are embedded in the mystery of the Middle Ages, scorned this modern contraption as a piece of vulgarity and an intruder of their sacred privacy. In consequence, the station is five miles from the village. Little that is modern and common has penetrated the conservative circle of this medieval community. Paved streets are unknown luxuries; such ordinary innovations as telephones are not tolerated; bath tubs of the eighteenth century still do faithful service, and even electric lights are novelties.

It is, perhaps, on account of the absence of these up-to-date appliances that Shipton-under-Wychwood is such a charming spot. Situated in a hollow between two gently rising slopes, it is complete and content within itself. Its inhabitants do not want to be bothered by the outside world and by its ignoble fixtures. The low stone houses cluster around the ancient village church with its imposing

spire, and the peaceful graveyard, with its weather-beaten monuments and sacred memories, slumbers in its shadow.

What restfulness I found in this little church! I entered it at the hour of matins and the vicar was entoning the old familiar words while the boy choir chanted the responses. Two tapering candles flickered on the altar; the sun's rays streamed through the colored windows in the chancel; the squire of the village knelt in his specially-provided stall, and the congregation reverently participated in the service. Morning Prayer ended, and the vested choristers slowly filed out. The two tiny lads at the head of the procession looked like a pair of heavenly cherubs.

The war, no doubt, has had its demoralizing effect upon Shipton-under-Wychwood but at the time of my visit it was as conservative and as opposed to change as the most stubborn medieval recluse. The old in science, religion, and government were sacred to its inhabitants, and any alteration in the existing order was regarded as dangerous to the very being of England. A Labor Government would never have ruled Britain if Shipton-under-Wychwood had cast the deciding vote.

The morning of my departure, I breakfasted in the village inn. As the half-dozen tables were crowded with guests, I was given a place with three Englishmen, strangers to me.

“Where are you going?” one of them asked me after we had exchanged a few of the pleasantries sometimes customary between human beings early in the morning.

“To London,” I replied.

"We are on our way to Chester. Why don't you come along with us? We have an extra seat in our motor," was the tempting invitation one of them gave me.

"I accept without hesitation and with great pleasure," I said.

In a few minutes the four of us were on our way to Chester, and as we sped over the English country roads, I thought to myself, "This experience is another evidence that the reputation of the British for frigidity and reserve is largely unjustified." My companions were *en route* from London to Liverpool and planned to make Chester by nightfall, so we pushed straight ahead without stopping.

I had become fairly familiar with London, the great metropolis; I had had a delightful touch of English-village life at Shipton-under-Wychwood, and I was eager to have a glimpse of a typical town of Britain. Chester proved to be a most happy representative.

My hospitable escorts decided to go on to Liverpool that night, and dropped me at Chester. I put up at a comfortable inn and, after the usual English meal of cold mutton and its accompaniments, I started down the street in search of some information about the town and its people. I entered a tiny bar, took a seat at a small table, and ordered a glass of port. In five minutes I was joined by several other guests of the place, and it was not long before I was an interested listener to all they had to tell me about the past and present of Chester. Its future wasn't mentioned. What a refreshing relief this was from the effervescent enthusiasm so frequently displayed in many communities of the New World!

The following morning, equipped with information sup-

plied by my friends at the "pub," I started out on a rambling tour of the city. I doubt if any place, in all my travels, has gripped me with such determined fascination as has Chester. Its odd streets and quaint shops, its unusual parks and ancient monuments, its old walls and venerable buildings make it a gem among the jewels of the earth. I wandered down a yew-bordered path to the Church of Saint John the Baptist which, although it dates from the tenth century and is partly in ruins, is in use today. My explorations next took me to the main streets, lined with old structures, many of which bear Biblical inscriptions carved at the time of the Plague as evidence that their inhabitants survived. Here the modern traffic problem was solved long ago, for in front of the quaint double-decked shops, the sidewalks were correspondingly laid on two levels. Later, I walked along the old Roman wall, so well preserved that it appeared to have been built the week before.

I came to the great cathedral, a treasure and a priceless possession for England and for all the world. England without her cathedrals would be like a forest without trees.

Although dating from the tenth century, the Chester Cathedral is today an active agency in the Christian life of the community. I had hardly placed my foot within its sacred portals when an elderly man, dressed in a flowing cassock, asked me if I had seen the church. He immediately took me under his wing, and for more than an hour he conducted me about the huge edifice. He explained the history of the many altars, took me up to one of the towers of the chapel for the blind where forty afflicted persons regularly worshiped, showed me the old library contain-

ing ancient Bibles and valuable manuscripts, threw open the cabinets and displayed costly and richly-embroidered copes, chasubles, and other vestments, and led me to the kitchen and refectory where modern appliances, mingled with old, were used to serve the people of the parish for socials, suppers, and other entertainments.

“How long are you going to be in Chester?” my guide inquired, as I thanked him on parting.

“I am leaving for London tonight,” I said.

“I am so sorry, for I should like to have you dine with me this evening.”

As soon as we parted, I asked a sexton who the gentleman was who had so courteously and interestedly conducted me about the church. The sexton said that he was the Dean of the Cathedral!

I returned to London and learned to my regret that the pugilist had become restless, had forsaken England, and had gone to France. I, too, became restless and decided to be on the move again. My destination was Amsterdam.

On my way to the Victoria-Dover train, I saw in the window of a shop a steamer rug which met my fancy. I went in and told the clerk, who was busily spreading canvas sheets over his goods, that I wanted to buy the rug.

“I am sorry, I am covering,” he said.

It was five minutes to twelve o’clock, and he was making preparations to close the shop for the Saturday afternoon holiday.

“It will only take a second for you to hand it to me,” I remarked.

“Can’t you see I am covering?” he repeated.

“I am leaving for the continent in a few minutes and

won't be able to come in on Monday. I'll take it just it is, unwrapped," I persisted.

"I am covering," was all the satisfaction I could get of that idiot as he continued to spread the sheets over his stock.

I walked out of the shop without the steamer rug. Was this a sample of English business methods, I thought, or was the clerk simply a hireling, eager to get away to keep an appointment with his girl?





CHAPTER II

A RESIDENT OF ROTTERDAM

MIDNIGHT seemed to be my customary time for landing in strange cities, and my arrival in Amsterdam was not an exception. It was shortly after twelve o'clock when my train steamed into the Dutch metropolis and a few minutes later, as I gazed about the huge square in front of the station, I thought that the entire population of Europe had congregated to greet me. I pulled my hat down securely on my head, took a firm grip on my bag, plunged into the human mass, and fought my way to the main street on the opposite side. As usual I had made no provision for a hotel, and I set out blindly to find accommodations commensurate with my modest means. At the first hostelry, the clerk, who spoke a suggestion of English, simply laughed at me and informed me that a person without a reservation that night would have to sleep in a canal, for every room in town was taken. It was Queen Wilhelmina's birthday. Amsterdam was in gala attire; the streets were jammed with gay crowds; the cafés were bulging with enthusiastic revelers, and the hotels were booked full for the occasion.

It was then one o'clock. I ordered a taxicab and instructed the driver to take me to the *Hotel de l'Europe*. There the clerk informed me that he had nothing and could give me no advice. I told the chauffeur to start the rounds of the small hotels. I must have gone to a score of these, only to receive the discouraging news from them all that they had no vacant rooms. The taxicab driver thought he could find accommodation for me at a little place on the outskirts of the city, a distance of about four miles. I was desperate enough to agree to anything. My eyes, however, were glued to the meter, and my heart

began to beat alarmingly fast as I saw the fare climb one guilder after another. It would be cheaper to buy the taxi and sleep in it than roll around in it all night, I thought.

The country inn had nothing to offer me! It was now two o'clock and discouraged to the point of stupidity, I told the chauffeur to drive me back to town. I was thinking of sleeping in the station or a church when I saw a houseboat on a canal. At my signal, the taxicab stopped and I went down to the bank and aroused the lighterman and his whole family. The chauffeur explained that I wanted a bed for the night. The boatman became furious, upbraided me in the most guttural Dutch, and no doubt consigned me to Gehenna as he slammed the door of his ark. Perhaps the infernal regions would be better than no place at all.

The driver and I returned to the taxicab, and we looked at one another in utter despair. He conveyed the idea to me that he had had enough and that he did not care where I slept. It was now three o'clock. I informed him that I would not leave him, and I insisted that he take me to the garage, where I would put up for the rest of the night. In desperation, he agreed. Accordingly, we drove thither and I paid him off, twenty-five guilders, the equivalent of ten dollars in American currency. He locked his car and me in the garage and departed to his well-earned rest. I coiled up in the taxi and tried to sleep.

One night of this sort of thing was enough. I decided to take no more chances with hotel accommodations in Amsterdam and moved to Rotterdam. I promptly located myself in the home of a Dutch family and soon thereafter was hard at work as assistant manager of a shipping

office, a position which had been unexepctedly offered to me.

Rotterdam and its environs were in the throes of a periodic flood. The River Maas had overflowed its banks; water was pouring over the dykes; the canals were overtaxed; the streets had become rivers, and houses and offices were inundated. Thousands of cattle were drowned, hundreds of houses damaged, and general havoc was the result. Wheeled vehicles were replaced by rowboats, and shopkeepers either donned rubber boots or went about with legs and feet bare.

The canal had risen so high in front of the office in which I was employed that the street was a solid pool. A foot of water covered the entire ground floor of the building. I went to the office in a boat and paddled about my work in rubber boots. I thought this flood was bad enough; but in the past certain sections of Holland have been visited by more appalling calamities. With a combination of heavy rains, overflowing river, high tide, and bursting dykes some of the less-protected smaller communities have suffered from terrible deluges with torrents of water carrying death and destruction before them.

A Dutchman in my office described to me one of these catastrophies, relating how a village had been almost completely submerged and a number of the inhabitants drowned. If this story is not true, the Dutchman is the prevaricator. He had the experience of being in this flood which came with great suddenness and descended upon the village with the speed of thunder. He escaped without unusual adventure, but some of his neighbors were not so fortunate.

One of his friends was taking a bath at the time and only had a second in which to flee with his life but without a vestige of clothing. The torrent hit his house like a mad blast of thunder and he dived from his window sill into the wild rushing stream. He was taken down the main street of the town along with tons of wreckage and, in some unaccountable way, was washed up into the branches of a tree. He perched himself on a solid limb and, clad in nothing but his skin, shiveringly surveyed the débris that flowed by.

Suddenly, among the floating fragments and remnants of the village, he saw what appeared to be the tresses of a woman. He discovered that the owner of the tresses was clinging tenaciously to a plank and was being swept unmercifully along with the current. He dived into the stream and swam to her rescue. After heroic efforts, he towed her safely to the tree and courteously assisted her to the limb to which she clung, half dazed and nearly exhausted by her experience.

Being in his natural garb and in a state of terrific embarrassment, he had not noticed that the young lady was also completely unclad. Here the two, arrayed in native buff, were perched side by side like two crows gazing intently at the rushing river below them. When the damsels was sufficiently revived to discover her predicament, she clothed herself in tears and—as sad as it is to relate—overcome with shame, she later broke off their engagement; for the man who had saved her life was her fiancé.

Living with a Dutch family ceased to be a novelty to me after I had become accustomed to the paper flowers

and porcelain bric-a-brac that adorned my room, to the hard bolster in my bed with which I had to sleep each night, and to the cheese for breakfast and the boiled red cabbage for every other meal. However, I could not adapt myself with any degree of complacency to the informal and liberal manner with which the members of the household made use of my bedroom. I had a reasonable amount of privacy at night, but in the daytime my quarters had the aspect of a hotel lobby rather than that of a secluded boudoir.

I discovered this one afternoon when I came home unexpectedly from the office and found a six-year-old girl playing beside my bed, with a dozen dolls strewn about the floor like forlorn corpses on a field of battle. I complained most violently to the landlady who made no response but, I thought, resolved to relieve my room in the future of extraneous persons. A few days later, I again came home unexpectedly and discovered the aged grandmother in my bed, slumbering peacefully and snoring loudly beneath the folds of the quilts. I aroused the old woman and unceremoniously chased her out of the room, pursuing her downstairs to her part of the house, where I delivered a vehement oration to the landlady, telling her in definite terms the thoughts that were in my head.

The room was not mine, however, in spite of the fact that I had rented it and paid for it with florins of the realm. I was sound asleep one night, inhaling the murky air of Holland as it trickled through my wooden shutter, when I was awakened by my landlady who insisted that I close the window, as her mother, that pestiferous old

lady, was catching cold downstairs at the other end of the house. When the dawn appeared, I packed my suitcase and moved out.

The Dutch are famous for their cleanliness. I fear, though, that their efforts are confined largely to appearances. They are continually scrubbing the sidewalks and the fronts of their houses, but bathtubs are as rare as sun-strokes in Greenland, and a current of fresh cool air is considered as dangerous as a pestilence. Holland is not alone in its fear of cold air, for I could add the whole continent of Europe and much of America to the ventilation-dreading band. Anyone who has ridden in a Pullman car in the United States or who has suffocated in a New York office building knows of what I speak.

I found lodging with another Dutch family consisting of a mother and her two daughters. I had hardly installed myself when the three members of the household gathered in my bedroom and held a reception which I thought would never terminate. I was conceited enough to think that the mother, whose girls were of marriageable age, had designs to palm them off on me. How I was to wed both of them, I didn't know. Bigamy, although a popular pastime, is a dangerous one, even in Holland.

Finally, after dislodging them from my room, I retired, weary from their profuse sociability. In the morning, after a breakfast of coffee, cold ham and cheese, but mostly cheese, I closed the door of the house behind me resolved to move out at once, although I hadn't been there twenty-four hours. I made arrangements with a French officer, residing temporarily in Rotterdam, to share with him his apartment which was around the corner from my

latest abode. I immediately called a taxicab, dashed back to my room, notified the stupefied landlady that I was abdicating and, not stopping to pack my belongings, piled them without ceremony into the waiting automobile. Within five minutes I had returned to my new home, much to the amazement and amusement of the Frenchman.

My housing problems didn't cease at this point, for after a few weeks my friend, with whom I was jointly sharing expenses, expressed a desire to move. I acquiesced, and he volunteered to look for another apartment. In a few days he informed me that he had found satisfactory rooms which he had agreed to take. However, he soon discovered another suite which was even more suitable than the first, and he closed a bargain with an agent for this one also. It developed later that he had failed to cancel the lease of the one in which we were living; consequently, we had three apartments on our hands and were confronted with three threatening Dutch landlords. I told the Frenchman that he had got us into the mess and it was up to him to get us out of it. This he finally was able to do, but not until he had dug deeply into his pocket, a burden which I later shared equally with him.

The conventional tourist to Holland avoids these housing problems with their interesting side-lights on the customs and characteristics of the people. From his first-class hotel, he goes to the Isle of Markem and sees picturesque life and ways, as in a show case, for it is there that a thoroughly artificial and cut-and-dried exhibition is displayed. He takes a trip to Delft to look over the porcelain, or to Harlem to view the tulip beds, or to The Hague to get a glimpse of the Royal Palace and the art galleries.

All of these I saw, and more. But I wondered, at the time, how many tourists had explored the canals, surface and subterranean, of Rotterdam. I had this experience in company with an Englishman.

In the summer we played tennis, which the Dutch invariably spoke of as football when we passed them with our rackets, but in adverse weather conditions we had to devise other means of exercise. My English friend had a dingey, and in this little tub we battled with the currents of the River Maas, explored the odd corners of the harbor of Rotterdam, made the acquaintance of many captains of ships anchored in midstream from whom we got an occasional refreshing bracer, and rowed the length of nearly every canal in the city.

On Saturday afternoons we would set out from the Maas Club on the river and row right into the heart of the town, under bridges and along narrow canals over which were hanging the backyards of private homes or the rear ends of stores or massive depots. We would jostle along between huge lighters loaded with freight and housing the captain and his whole family. Dogs, chickens, and babies played on deck but none of them ever fell overboard.

These long solemn barges, creeping slowly on the surface of the water, are among the foremost of the many quaint sights of the Netherlands. They are the carriers of the country and the homes of a large floating population. How familiar is the smoking stovepipe emerging from below the deck at the stern of a lighter where the cramped but otherwise comfortable quarters of the captain and his family are located! Sometimes the cooking is done on deck but below are the staterooms with bunks, and the



tiny dining room elaborately decorated with tinsel, paper flowers, glass-enclosed clocks, pictures in gilt frames, figures of the saints, and occasionally a stunted piano. Here the babies are born, spend their youth as members of the crew, and grow to manhood, when they follow in their father's footsteps on other lighters.

Occasionally our route would be the canal along the main street of Rotterdam where we could see the fashionable shops and review the rosy-cheeked Dutch girls as they strolled up and down the sidewalks. Another day we would direct our dingey through the retail section crowded with passing vehicles and pedestrians. The people would stare at us, and the dogs, those faithful creatures that pull the loads of Holland, would hesitate a minute to bark.

During one of our excursions, we came to a canal which apparently terminated in a blind alley. On close investigation we discovered that there was an outlet through a culvert which, when choked with water, had the shape of a setting moon, half concealed below the horizon. The Englishman and I decided to row through this tunnel, and we steered our boat to the aperture. In a minute we were moving rapidly along in the dark. We drew in our oars and forced our craft ahead by placing our hands on the roof of the covered canal. Stygian blackness engulfed us and we saw no end to our journey, but we shoved the dingey along at top speed. We were tempted to retrace our steps and return to safety, but the spirit of adventure egged us on. I thought of Jean Valjean and his wanderings in the sewers of Paris. On we went until we felt that we had traversed the entire subterranean area of Rotterdam. Finally we saw a streak of light in the distance. This gave

us encouragement and hastened our progress. Soon we emerged from the flowing tunnel only to find that we were still far from freedom for we had reached but a sort of oasis. It was a break in the underground canal, a small square space covered above with opaque glass through which the light feebly penetrated.

We knew that the tide was rising and that if we didn't pursue our course we would be imprisoned in this watery compartment with the possibility of serious consequences. To go ahead seemed to be our only choice, and we entered the continuation of the covered canal. The bow of our boat now bumped against the roof. We shoved along and were soon again in complete darkness. Our escapade had become more than an afternoon's pleasant adventure. We were determined, however, to see it through, and we worked like Chinese coolies propelling that little tub beneath the city of Rotterdam. Finally we again saw light ahead, and our hopes were raised. Soon we were forcing our way into the wide expanse of a canal. We had gone the entire distance of the business section of the city.

A crowd was on hand to meet us, the news of our venture having been spread by a man who had seen us enter the tunnel and had feared for our safety. A brief article in the *Rotterdamsche Currant* the next day gave an account of our adventure. In spite of this publicity a Dutchman, more foolhardy than we, attempted the feat the following afternoon with the handicap of an hour later tide. His calls for help attracted attention, and he was rescued by the fire department which closed a section of the tunnel and pumped out sufficient water to liberate the victim.

Only a man with a heart of stone and a brain filled with prejudices could live in Holland for a year without recognizing the sterling qualities of the Dutch and the unusual beauty of their lowlands. I formed an enduring admiration for the people and the country. The bond between America and the Netherlands is an exceptionally strong one. Holland has given us many of our leading families and one of our presidents, and she has supplied us with a steady stream of her sturdy sons. The United States, in the words of one of our prominent diplomats, has only the highest respect for this nation and her people—a little country perched on the edge of Europe, courageously working out her destiny to the admiration of the world.

Rotterdam has been called the mudhole of Europe, and even the Dutch mention it apologetically; but they are justly proud of Amsterdam, The Hague, Harlem, and all the rest of their cities. Their particular pride, however, is the unusual charm of the rural districts where lie the rich green fields, dotted with grazing cattle and bordered by straight canals. The little brick houses with rustic draw-bridges, and the cobbled lanes crowded with clog-shod children with happy voices and rosy faces add the finishing touches to the scene. A world-wide traveller told me that he considered Holland the most unusual country he had ever seen.

“In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch
Is offering too little and asking too much.”

These lines of Canning’s make a rhyme but nothing more. In business the Hollanders are clever, efficient, and honest, and on these principles they have built up a trade

which reaches to all points of the earth. They have acquired a colonial empire which has ten times the population of the mother country and many times its area.

The friends one makes are a good test of a country's worth. I made scores of them in Holland. However, the most unique friendship I made while in Rotterdam was with a man I never saw, and he was not a Dutchman. He was Dr. Horace Fletcher, apostle of mastication, author of many books and advocate of the science that bears his name. *Fletcherism* is a household word both in the United States and abroad and has found its way into the dictionary. Although our cognomen was the same, we were not in any way related.

It fell to my lot to forward, under a covering letter, a collection of mail to Dr. Fletcher in Copenhagen where he was residing in order to obtain special treatment for an illness from which he was suffering. In a few days I received a cordial reply which began "Dear Kinsman" and which was his initial communication in a happy correspondence. He was eager to know if I were a descendant of a certain Robert Fletcher and if I were a member of the Fletcher Family Union of America. He explained that in order to qualify for membership in this society, one had to be of the Robert Fletcher line and had to have an untainted moral record although, he admitted, there had been some glaring exceptions to this latter requisite.

I replied that I had never even heard of Robert Fletcher or his Union; that, in spite of an appalling ignorance of my pedigree, I felt certain that I was not a descendant of the worthy gentleman, nor was I a member of the society

although I possessed in full measure the moral qualification!

My response brought forth another letter from Dr. Fletcher, and our correspondence began to assume the aspects of a permanent institution. We exchanged communications every few days and, in the course of several months, grew to know one another very well. I learned that he was confined to his bed with a serious ailment and that he considered my letters a diversion. His letters were certainly most interesting to me, for he was a man of profound knowledge, an entertaining writer, and the possessor of an enviable sense of humor.

In one of his early epistles, he stated that he wanted to become thoroughly acquainted with me. This letter contained a series of questions in regard to information on the following subjects: my name in full; age; height; weight; color of hair, eyes, and complexion; single or married; education; religion; political views; literary and artistic tastes; ideas on women, liquor, and food, and so on. I replied most conscientiously to his list, adding voluntarily at the end that I wore a size fifteen and a half collar.

Our correspondence then took on a more serious phase and we discussed art, literature, economics, and politics. This led to an exchange of books, and he sent me a full set of his writings, many of which treated of his favorite theme of chewing food. In one of his communications, he explained that *Fletcherism* simply consisted of doing everything well, from eating a peanut to organizing an international convention. He sent me reams of manuscripts of a new volume he was preparing with the request

that I edit them. Finally, he wanted me to travel with him as soon as he recovered sufficiently to go about again.

This correspondence continued for more than a year, and I looked forward with great pleasure to his weekly letter which invariably arrived on Saturday. One weekend, however, his usual communication did not appear although it was his turn to write, for I never failed to reply most promptly. A period of nearly a month elapsed, and not a word came from my good friend for whom I had developed an affectionate attachment. I was on the point of writing to ascertain the cause of the respite when a letter came from Copenhagen addressed to me in a strange hand. It was from his nurse.

Dr. Horace Fletcher had passed away, and on his death-bed had sent his love to three persons. I was the first on the list.





CHAPTER III

THE BUTCHER, THE BAKER,
THE CLOTHING-MAKER

ONE of my best friends in Belgium was a tailor, Francois Van Huy by name. I met him in Rotterdam where he was temporarily employed as courier by the office to which I was attached. When I was transferred to Antwerp to become the manager of a large office, I took Van Huy with me. It was an unusual relationship that existed between us, and it was difficult for my associates to understand how the chief of the *bureau* could be on such close terms with the messenger. I thought so much of Van Huy, in fact, that I told him he was to be my best man in case I should marry in Europe. However, such an event did not occur, but if it had occurred, it was my full intention to select him for the honor.

Van Huy had become almost indispensable to me during my stay in Rotterdam. He found my lodgings and was my advance agent in many personal and business matters. He spoke English, French, German, Dutch, and Flemish; and there was hardly a conceivable situation that he could not meet and handle with diplomacy and ease. He always had access to my office, a privilege he never abused, and not once during our association did he step beyond the bounds of his post.

When the news came that I was to be transferred to Belgium, I sent for Van Huy and told him that I wanted him to go with me. We were to leave Rotterdam by automobile the following morning. When I arrived at my apartment that evening, I found that he had packed all my belongings, which had grown considerably during my year's sojourn in Holland. My luggage had been officially sealed and put in shape to pass the customs agents at the border without examination. This was the work of Van

Huy who had arranged for an inspection in my quarters before my departure so that I would have no inconvenience at the frontier. The next day the two of us drove to Antwerp in an automobile loaded to the roof, passing the *douane* without delay or annoyance.

Van Huy was delighted to return to Belgium, for he had been away a number of years and was eager to see his relations and friends again.

“I have a cousin who is a big fat butcher here. We might drop in to see him,” he suggested as we were entering the walls of Antwerp.

“Fine,” I said. “I should like to meet him.”

“His wife is a splendid cook and I’ll make her invite us to dinner. My cousin, being in the business, picks out the choicest meat, and I am sure you will have one of the best meals you ever ate,” he continued as we rolled along the twisting cobbled streets of the city.

In a few minutes we turned off the *Place de Meir* on to the *Marché aux Souliers* and our car came to a stop in front of a tiny Flemish butcher shop.

“There’s the fat dub now,” said Van Huy excitedly, pointing his finger at his cousin, who was half concealed behind hanging carcasses and cured hams, cutting a large steak for a customer. The butcher recognized Van Huy and rushed to the door.

“Here’s the big stiff of a butcher about whom I have been telling you,” was his introduction. His cousin was a two-hundred-and-fifty pounder, a native of Flanders, and a good-natured figure as, clad in the livery of his trade, he stood in the doorway of his shop shaking with embarrassed laughter. He invited us to have some *schnapps* and

conducted us into his private office and reception room in the rear. He opened a bottle of Dutch gin and we drank to the health of one another. The young son of the family appeared, followed by his mother, a pleasant and intelligent little woman. They joined the cheerful company, emptying their glasses as an expression of welcome to Van Huy and myself. Mrs. Butcher immediately asked us to dinner and we required no urging, for we both accepted her invitation as soon as it was out of her mouth.

I have eaten many good meals in my life, but the dinner that the Flemish butcher and his wife served that night stands out as one of the most conspicuous landmarks in my gastronomic experience. I am not a finished epicure, nor am I a perfect glutton, but I am inclined to agree with Shaw's saying that "there is no love sincerer than the love of food," especially when the food is good and the eater is extremely hungry. These were the circumstances at the butcher's dinner.

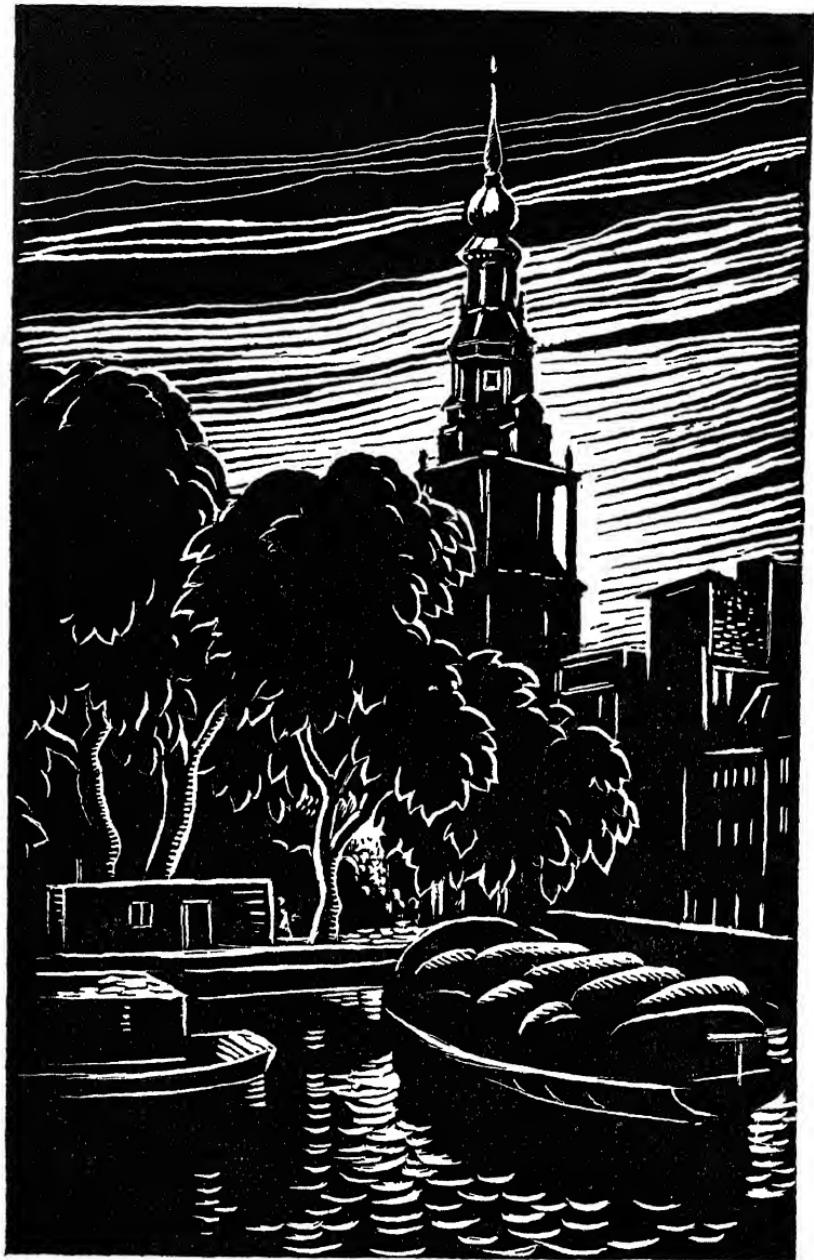
The best wines of France are found in Belgium, the cellars of which are famous for the excellent vintages they contain. Such luxuries are not confined to the rich. People of means, and in some instances the comparatively poor, have *caves* bulging with the choicest beverages, and each proud owner is usually a connoisseur. The butcher was not an exception.

The dinner began with a round of mellow sherry; a delicious bottle of Haute Sauterne of the excellent vintage of 1906 was served with the fish; Saint Julien of the unrivalled year of 1911 followed; a liberal supply of Pommery topped off the meal, and cognac of 1865 in fish-bowl glasses, so as to radiate the aroma, accompanied the

black coffee. This end of the repast was supervised by our host, but to his wife we voted the honors of the evening. The abundant menu consisted of a tomato soup so rich and delicate that it seemed to have been prepared in Paradise, a shrimp salad with dressing as pure as an angel's thoughts, *sole frite* with butter sauce fit for a king, steak so tender that it fell apart with the weight of the knife, potato balls as dainty in flavor as the fragrance of a flower, and ice cream which struggled to rival the soda fountain variety in America.

The dinner was a success in every way, and it lasted until such a late hour that the butcher and his wife insisted that Van Huy and I spend the night in their house. This invitation was also gratefully accepted, and we were conducted to rooms directly over the meat shop. I had a comfortable bed situated snugly against the wall and so high above the floor that it resembled an upper Pullman berth. It was as soft as a feather pillow but before settling down for the night, I threw out the infernal bolster upon which my head was supposed to recline. I didn't fancy the discomfort of sleeping in a sitting posture.

Before switching out the light, I surveyed the gallery of pictures surrounding me. Butchers, in all stages of development and of all branches of the family tree, looked down upon me from their gilded frames on the walls. Grandfather butchers and uncle butchers, butchers' sons and butchers' daughters, butchers' relations and butchers' friends all stared me in the face. Perched upon the mantelpiece, in the midst of the array, was a figure of Saint Joseph with extended hand giving me his blessing as I shut my eyes.



Mr. and Mrs. Butcher and I became good friends at once, and a cordial welcome always awaited me in the little back room behind the shop. I dropped in several times a month for a chat with the corpulent tradesman and his amiable wife, and we would discuss the price of meat, the shortage of beef, or the latest Flemish scandal. Occasionally I brought a box of candy or a bunch of flowers, but my small tokens were insignificant in comparison with their unbounded and natural hospitality.

My first problem after my arrival in Antwerp was to find comfortable living quarters. I turned this task over entirely to Van Huy. He placed advertisements in the newspapers, received a score of replies and, with the office automobile at his disposal, he went the rounds and examined all the prospects. One morning he appeared before my desk and informed me that he had found a place which he thought would meet with my approval. He wanted me to go with him to see it. This I did, and it turned out to be thoroughly satisfactory. I moved in immediately. Van Huy knew my likes and dislikes and my whims and moods as well as I did myself.

I accompanied Van Huy on his round of visits to his relations whom he hadn't seen for many years. They were all engaged in one trade or another, and I was thus able to get an insight into this stratum of Flemish life, an insight I should never have acquired as an opulent and fleeting tourist stopping at the leading hotel of Antwerp.

One day we called upon a cousin of his who conducted a small bakery and pastry shop. He was a solid citizen with a wholesome wife and a sturdy quartet of beet-cheeked youngsters. The Poles and the Belgians are

famous for their pastry, and there is little choice between the merits of their respective products. Fresh rolls, round loaves of bread, delicious tarts, enticing cakes, and chocolate, cocoanut, and fruit *pâtisserie* were on display in lavish abundance in this Antwerp baker's shop. He didn't have a reception room, but he conducted us into the combination kitchen, dining room, and parlor where he served a bottle of his rarest wine.

While Van Huy and his cousins discussed old times, I gazed about the room. A long narrow stove extended from the wall to the middle of the floor; large, brightly-polished pots were suspended from rails attached to its sides. A crucifix hung above the mantelpiece on which were porcelain figures of the Virgin and Saint Joseph, enshrined in glass globes. Life-size photographs of members of the family decorated the room. The furniture was sparse but sturdy, and the floor was tiled and carpetless.

Van Huy had a rich uncle who owned a château in the country as well as a residence in Antwerp. He was a pudding-maker and had an extensive factory adjoining his town house. His product was a starchy concoction, put up in tins and sold in all grocery shops. Van Huy asked me to go with him one evening to his uncle's city home for dinner. I gladly acquiesced, thinking that it was simply an affair *en famille*.

Great was my surprise, however, when I arrived to find a house crowded with guests expressly assembled to meet me. I was received in a most cordial but ostentatious manner by the pudding-maker's wife, a portly and jewel-laden woman who spoke French with evident difficulty and with a Siamese accent and who relieved herself of a speech

which had apparently been rehearsed to fragments before the mirror. This sudden and unexpected reception was disconcerting. I made an effort to assemble my scattered wits and spreading emotions and, as the very embodiment of poise, I thought, tried to tell my hostess how delighted I was to be present and how kind it was of her to entertain me; but the French language was inadequate, and I became hopelessly inarticulate. After stumbling and stammering for an hour, so it seemed to me, I grinned and left my mangled sentences unfinished.

My coming was evidently an event of considerable importance for the chatter of the guests was instantly muffled when I entered, and the curious eyes of all were focused upon me. I was soon introduced to everyone. I could not help being impressed by the lack of ease of the hostess and the others present. There was an air of uncertainty on their part as to what to do next and an apparent strain to avoid social blunders.

The house was a large one, approached, as many Belgian residences are, through a hall on a level with the street. A living room and dining room, forming one big salon, were the scene of the occasion and were furnished with gold-framed lavender plush chairs and couches, a few clusters of flowers and potted plants being the only evidence of good taste that I could see.

The gathering was diverting, and I met a good sample of a substantial section of the life of Antwerp. The butcher, the baker and the clothing-maker were there with their wives, children, relations, and friends. I could not have been received with more solemnity if I had been a

composite reproduction of Babe Ruth, Harold Lloyd, and the Prince of Wales.

The hostess led the way to the dining room, and we all sat down at a table sumptuously laden with an extravagance of food. The act of eating, a habit common to butcher and traveller alike, soon broke down the barriers of formality and relieved the awkward tension of the party. The advent of the pudding-maker, who had been detained in his factory and who was an easy-going, unconventional man, contributed to the ease of the situation. It was not long before assumed disguises, unnatural poses, and incongruous gestures were discarded and I was discovered to be nothing but an ordinary human being after all.

According to Swift, a bachelor's fare consists of bread and cheese and kisses. This seemed to be the accepted menu of the social circle in which I found myself that evening, for hardly had the dinner been finished when the hostess organized games, similar in their essential points to post office and forfeits; and I, being the guest of honor, was repeatedly and relentlessly chosen as the conspicuous victim of their penalties. I have had many odd experiences but I doubt if I have ever been subjected to so unusual an ordeal as on this occasion. Never before had I osculated and been osculated by so many wives and daughters of Flemish butchers, bakers, and pudding-makers.

Van Huy was vastly amused by the incidents of the evening and, as we strolled home, he chuckled delightedly at the many contrasting situations of the party. He con-

fessed that he had suggested the dinner and that he had paved the way for my unusual reception by singing my praises to the skies and heralding me as nothing short of a prince among princes.

Van Huy now decided to resume his trade in which he had not engaged for a long time. He went to Menin in Flanders, where he was well known, and opened a tailor shop. A few days after his departure, I received a notice from Rotterdam that an overcoat and two suits of clothes, which I had previously ordered, were finished and ready for delivery. I telegraphed Van Huy, asking him to go to Holland to fetch them for me. At ten o'clock the morning following the dispatch of my message, he dashed into my office in Antwerp and breathlessly told me that there were only a few minutes before his train departed for Rotterdam, and inquired where my clothes were, if they had been paid for, and other particulars. In an instant he was off.

He returned late that afternoon with the objects of his quest. The trip to Rotterdam and return was six hours by rail. He had only twenty minutes to spare between the arrival and departure of trains. At Rotterdam he hopped into a taxicab and told the chauffeur to drive at full speed. He flung himself into the tailor shop, demanded my suits, shed his coat, made an effort to put on one of mine, gave up the struggle, fled out of the store, jumped into the waiting automobile, and was out of sight before the bewildered breeches-maker knew what the commotion was all about. Van Huy wanted to wear one of my suits and the overcoat in order to get them through the customs without duty, but they were too small for him. However,

he managed it some other way. He returned to my office with the clothes intact just as I was answering a long distance telephone call from the Rotterdam tailor who was greatly agitated, thinking he had given my suits to the wrong man.

A few weeks later, when in Ghent, I had a luncheon engagement with a count, the Governor of the Province of East Flanders. I had known him in Holland when he was secretary of the Belgian Legation at The Hague, and he had asked me to call upon him in his country. The count was an attractive man, had been educated at Oxford, and had an English accent and vocal inflection more pronounced than the most exaggerated undergraduate. This fact, coupled with a saw-edged monocle which he was continually adjusting, gave him the aspect of being more British than Belgian and made him appear as the typical American stage caricature of an Englishman. He entertained me most cordially in the Governor's Palace.

I left the count and met the tailor, who had come to Ghent from Menin. Members of the Van Huy family were scattered all over Flanders. Before leaving Ghent, Van Huy led me to the city's largest grocery store, which belonged to one of his many uncles. When we entered I was introduced to several pretty Flemish girls, cousins of the tailor's, who were acting as clerks behind the counters. His uncle ushered us into a little private room which he used as an office and I was given another example of the hospitality of the middle classes of Belgium.

At Ghent, Van Huy and I decided to motor to Poperingue, a small village near the coast, where the farmhouse of the tailor's grandfather was located. The two Flanders

provinces are fascinating districts. We rode over cobble-stone highways lined with beautiful shade trees. Tiny fields of flax and wheat flanked the roads in every direction, and the quaint little brick houses with sloping roofs and twin chimneys looked like toys as we sped on our way. We passed through one village after another, each with its groups of playing children, sabot-shod adults and burden-pulling dogs. What faithful and eager creatures these animals are! I have never seen one, no matter how small the dog or how large the load, loaf on the job. They were always straining at the tugs.

The farmhouse at Poperingue proved to be a long, one-story, brick structure in the center of an extensive field enclosed by a stone fence. It was some distance from the main highway and, as we passed through the gate, it made an attractive picture in its setting of green meadow where a number of cattle were grazing. It was a cold, sharp day, unusual for the time of year, and a warm fire was the most welcome greeting we could imagine. In a minute we were inside the large main room toasting our backs before the leaping flames on the huge hearth. The tailor's grandfather, a man of eighty-five and totally blind, was propped up beside the old Flemish stove; his middle-aged daughter was scurrying about preparing the evening meal, and his two sturdy sons, who had just returned from the fields, hugged the fireplace with us.

The room in which we stood was long and dark with a low-timbered ceiling. Huge pots and pans hung upon the walls and on the sides of the lengthy, narrow stove. A neat pile of evenly-cut wood rose above the window sill at one end, and in a corner were baskets of vegetables

awaiting preparation for dinner by the skillful hands of the tailor's aunt. The floor, made of red clay, was sunk a few inches below the surface of the ground. The great fireplace was built of cobblestones, and the mantelpiece was covered with hunting trophies and bric-a-brac. Several large bows and six-foot arrows, equipment for a popular Flemish sport, were stacked together in one corner of the room.

The meal was soon ready and we stepped into the dining room, where good wholesome food awaited us in generous quantities. A hot soup, fried chicken, many vegetables, bread and butter, and ordinary claret comprised the bill of fare. The room was like a dark refectory of the Middle Ages. The low wooden ceiling gave a cramped aspect to the place; the dull flicker of the hanging lamp cast a sort of mystic light about us, and the large crucifix on the wall and the figure of the Virgin on the mantelpiece lent a religious tinge to the scene.

Van Huy's aunt was a most gracious and natural hostess. The hospitality of the Flemish farmer, if this were a fair sample, will linger long in my memory as having few equals. The tailor and I departed full of good food, in a happy mood, and with a determination to return again, which we did on several occasions.

We went on to Menin where I stayed that night at Van Huy's home over his tailor shop. I met his mother and sister in the morning at breakfast but I didn't see his father, for he was sick in bed.

"I am sorry my father isn't well enough for you to meet him," said Van Huy, "for I should like you to see him as he really is."

The tailor made this statement with a smile, for he had in mind a little incident which had occurred several months earlier in Antwerp. He had drawn a photograph from his pocket and, showing it to me with great pride, had asked, "What do you think of this man?"

"He looks like a big bruiser," I had replied. "Who is he, a second-story man?" I inquired carelessly, as I returned the picture to him.

Van Huy nodded but said nothing. The next day a friend of mine, to whom the tailor had related the story, told me that the photograph of the bruiser was none other than that of Van Huy's father! I had put my foot right into trouble.

"Why don't you show a decent picture of your father?" was the question with which I greeted the tailor when I next saw him. I explained that I couldn't change my opinion of the photograph but that I would reserve any estimate of his father until I had the pleasure of seeing him in person. He still said nothing but apparently was not offended, although he did not refer to the incident again until this visit of mine.

I took leave of my tailor friend at Menin and returned to Antwerp. The next time I saw him was on an occasion several years later when I was again in Europe. In the meantime, he had been married. I sent a telegram informing him that I was in Brussels and would arrive at Ypres, where he was then living, at six o'clock for dinner.

As I entered his shop that evening, he was measuring a customer for a suit and he asked me to sit down for a minute. Rolls of cloth were banked high on one side of

the store and rows of completed garments flanked the other. The business at hand over, he turned to me.

"That was short notice you gave us. I received your message only twenty minutes ago, for it was delayed in transit," he said on greeting me. "I didn't know you were on this side of the earth."

"I hope I am not inconveniencing you," I remarked.

"No, my wife was very excited and nervous about your coming until I calmed her fears," he explained.

"I am very sorry," I said.

"Forget it," he interrupted. "The excitement is over, the meal is ready, the damage has been done, don't think of it any more." He was so agreeable and so definite about it that I dropped any further attempt to excuse myself.

His wife, a gracious little Flemish girl, soon appeared and, after introductions, we went from the shop to a small room where we had an excellent dinner. The tailor made a good host and entertained me most cordially, as always. He served his best champagne and we drank to the health of his wife and toasted everything which offered the slightest provocation.





CHAPTER IV

A GERMAN CHRISTMAS IN FRANCE

DURING my peregrinations, the World War broke out. I joined the Commission for Relief in Belgium and was appointed delegate to the District of Longwy in Occupied France. When I arrived at Arlon, in the Belgian province of Luxembourg, where I was to be met by a German officer, I swung off my train and a private took my bag. I pressed my way through the little station crowded with soldiers and was formally introduced to my accompanying officer, a Prussian lieutenant. We got into a large, closed, drab-colored Mercedes car with the German Imperial coat-of-arms plastered on its side like the eagle on a bottle of the late Budweiser beer and started for Longwy, a forty minute ride in the occupied territory of suffering France.

Rittmeister Rumelin, a tall youthful Uhlan, greeted me very cordially at the door of the requisitioned house of a Frenchman in which the staff and the American delegate lived. As I entered, half a dozen privates and non-commissioned officers came to attention with a clap of their heels which so startled me that I made no response. My bag was hustled upstairs and I was shown to my room, one which I was destined to occupy for many months.

That evening I sat down to dinner with thirty officers. To lift a peaceful and harmless civilian from his innocent pursuits and suddenly transplant him into the midst of a formal gathering of Prussian officers behind the German lines was a change sufficiently revolutionary to disturb his mental balance. This august assembly of bowing and saluting officials was the stiffest and most painful assortment I have ever seen. Not one man appeared to be at

his ease, and I myself could not have felt more out of place in a ladies' dressing-room.

The mansion in which this dinner took place belonged to a French director of one of the smelters of Longwy. It had been seized by the military authorities and was the domicile of a number of officers who had charge of the iron works of the district. It was a pretentious building with large elaborately-decorated rooms and hallways and, when thronged with soldiers of the Kaiser's army, resembled a castle of the Dark Ages. Several colonels and majors were present. The rest of the party was composed of captains and lieutenants who were either permanently or temporarily stationed at Longwy in various capacities. Some of them were connected with the local military administration, others were in charge of the railroad, and still others were attached to regiments on furlough from the front. Several of them had their arms in slings, one chap was on crutches, and two had bandaged heads as the result of recent wounds.

I had heard of men eating their dinner out of a bottle, but I had never known before that it was really possible. There was food on the table, but it was merely incidental. The cellar of the Frenchman's house provided the greater part of the nourishment. Bordeaux and Sauterne bottles were emptied in such rapid succession that one was puzzled to know how the drinkers found room to store all the contents. Champagne followed in its turn.

The world heard so much about the efficiency of the German Army that many persons are surprised to hear that liquor, the supposed enemy of this quality, played such an important part in the life of the Kaiser's officers.

In the trenches the fluid may have been a luxury, but behind the lines it was as plentiful as ammunition. I have been at scores of parties where all the Germans, from the major down, were filled to their final capacities. I have heard officers order champagne at every hour of the day and night, not excluding nine o'clock in the morning. I have called on a captain at four in the afternoon to find him sleeping off the effects of a midday debauch. I have seen officers dispose of liquor with an extravagance as if it were as cheap as the world's fresh air, and as harmless.

"If writing letters home and drinking can win the war, the Germans will easily be victorious." These were the words of Hauptmann Neuerbourg, an aide to one of the Americans. Liquor played its part and as long as the cellars of the French were able to supply the Germans with rare vintages, it flowed about on all occasions with the volume of the Gulf Stream. If the war had been a drinking bout, I believe Neuerbourg's statement would have been true.

In the billiard room after dinner, that first evening, we all drew about a large open fire and drank Munich beer while an orchestra of eight soldiers entertained us with excellent music. One good-natured captain, with the regulation closely-shaven head and his share of liquor, amused us with many original and versatile accomplishments. He lead the orchestra with the most fantastic and clownish gestures. The next instant he seized the violin of a soldier musician and played it with such skill that one could imagine it was his specialty. During the same selection, he shifted from the violin to the cornet and handled that instrument as if it were a toy with which he had been

familiar all his life. Nor were his talents confined to music. He was also a speech-maker and evidently an amusing one, from the amount of laughter he evoked from his official audience. He spoke in German and in the course of his oration made comments on everyone in the room. My turn came, and he welcomed me to their midst. He prefaced his remarks by saying, "I am sorry I can not *sprechen Englisch avec vous*," and finished with a glowing tribute of which I did not understand a single word.

According to the regulations of the German Army, each delegate of the Commission for Relief in the six districts of the North of France always had to be accompanied by an officer. The American was not allowed to converse with any Frenchman unless in the presence of a German, and all his correspondence in connection with his work had to be submitted to his officer to be censored. His pass was issued from the Great Headquarters of the German Army at Charleville, the best document obtainable unless signed by the Kaiser himself.

The American lived with his officers. In the District of Longwy, our household consisted of nine members. Rittmeister Rumelin, an innocuous sort of chap, was the chief. He was the son of a wealthy banker of Southern Germany and, although a Uhlan, was a kind-hearted simple fellow, contrary to the reputation that members of these regiments usually had. Oberleutenant Ludert, a rich coal operator of Hamburg before the war, was the second in command, having replaced the Prussian lieutenant who was there on my arrival. He was a Dragoon and was as frivolous as a sophomore and about as rational as a moth. Then there was Sergeant Mayer, who was in charge of the clerical

staff. He was assisted by a private who had been a teller in a bank. The two officers and I each had an orderly, a private soldier. Two military chauffeurs completed the list. We all lived in the same house and had two Luxembourg servants who prepared our meals from the rations provided by the army. The officers and I ate together in the dining room, and the other men had their mess in the kitchen.

All of this was a decided novelty to me. Under the guardianship of Rumelin and Ludert, I saw much of the territory occupied by the Fifth German Army. In the big military automobile we covered the entire District of Longwy, made several trips down the Vosges almost to the Swiss border, visited Strasbourg, Metz, and Cologne in Germany, and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. I was often immediately behind the German lines, saw large movements of troops, and was under Allied fire in many instances. I topped off my experiences by spending ten days in Berlin and Hamburg immediately before the severance of diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany.

It was several months before Christmas when I took up my duties at Longwy, but even at this early date the Germans had begun preparations for the festival. The war was almost forgotten and was relegated to a place of second importance. Rumelin and Ludert made all the plans and directed the carrying-out of the celebration in every detail. The whole household of officers, under-officers, and privates set about systematically to prepare for the holiday, and much time and energy were devoted to the arrangements. I, being only a half-civilized Ameri-

can, was supposed never to have seen a Christmas tree nor to know anything about the festival, and the few suggestions I ventured to make were received with such coldness that I resolved to play the role of spectator and let the Germans have their little celebration in their own way.

Rumelin and Ludert compiled a list of those who were to receive gifts, and they spent much of their time in November and December making trips to Metz, Cologne, and Brussels to purchase the presents. The name of nearly every German official in the district was on the list; each member of the household was to get two or three favors; the station master was down for twenty marks; the military telegraph operators were to be the recipients of one thing or another; the railway gateman was to have ten marks; the gardener was scheduled for a trifle, and every rake in the town—so it seemed to me—was going to fall heir to a trinket of some kind. Two orderlies were dispatched to procure a tree from the neighboring forest on the hill, and the rittmeister went to Metz to buy the usual ornaments, tinsel, and trimmings. The oberleutenant was commissioned to provide the food and drink for the occasion.

Great excitement prevailed in the house the day before Christmas. The tree was installed in the billiard room, and Rumelin and Ludert spent hours arranging and decorating the thing. I was hardly allowed to touch it. The captain unfolded to me all the mysteries of such an occasion and explained in detail the intricacies and peculiar habits of Christmas trees. I ventured the remark that I had seen thousands of the blooming things, that we had

them in America before the German Empire was created, and that I thought there should be a law prohibiting their use, for the custom was the cause of the destruction of millions of trees annually. The oberleutenant was as busy as a circus clown directing the preparation of the dinner. The orderlies were kept on razor-edge running errands and performing endless commissions.

Christmas Eve arrived at last. All the members of the household assembled in the hallway and, on a signal from the rittmeister, solemnly filed into the billiard room where at one end stood a tree alive with a hundred burning candles. Rumelin played the organ while the motley crew burst into song. The two officers, two sergeants, two chauffeurs, four privates, and a pair of cooks sang a couple of dozen verses of some German hymn while the French gardener and I stood in silence.

The rittmeister officiated as Santa Claus and distributed the gifts. The head chauffeur received a military cap, a pair of driving gloves, and a muffler; the two cooks were each given a satin blouse; the gardener was handed an envelope full of marks, and each man was the recipient of something. I found myself the possessor of a pair of cuff links, given me jointly by the officers, and a photograph of Rumelin in Uhlan uniform, a gift of the captain. Finally the two officers began firing presents at one another. They exchanged numerous trifles among which I remember a silver-tipped swagger stick and several boxes of scented soap for Rumelin, and a leather case containing three gold-topped perfume bottles and a bracelet for Ludert.

The rank and file marched out and the rittmeister, the oberleutenant, and I sat down to dinner. In a starving country, it was nothing short of sin to eat that meal. Hors-d'œuvre, salad, a roast goose, plum pudding which had been sent from Germany by Frau Rumelin, candy, fruit, champagne, cigars, and liqueurs were the array of provisions which greeted us. I ate in silence while the officers chattered in German, which I do not understand.

A visiting major came in after dinner and the four of us spent the evening in the billiard room discussing the war. It was usually after a special and ponderous dinner that we talked about the world conflict, and I was often the target at which they directed their remarks. Sometimes these discussions developed into heated arguments and I had to meet and refute their statements.

America was always the object of criticism, and often contempt. The munition question was foremost in their minds. The United States was not neutral and was in league with Great Britain. As neutrals we should have insisted that our ships be allowed to go to German ports, but at the same time we should have cleared our merchant marine off the high seas when Germany instituted her submarine warfare. I mentioned the violation of the neutrality of Belgium and the sinking of the *Lusitania* and a dozen other ships, and suggested that America had stood with patience about the limit of what a self-respecting nation could.

“But America is not a nation,” was the ridiculous and astounding remark which came from Ludert.

“What do you mean?” I calmly asked. “Define your terms. What is a nation, anyway?”

He thought for a minute and then gave this gem in response. "A nation is what America isn't."

"That's fine logic, Lieutenant," I said. "America isn't a sausage, therefore, a sausage is a nation. I know what you wish to say. America is a young country, she is made up of many races, and has not yet developed a distinctive type."

"Therefore, she is not a nation," he interrupted.

"Neither is Germany then," I stated. "The German Empire has only existed since 1870; America won her independence a hundred and forty years ago. Germany is the biggest mixture of races in all Europe—Poles, Prussians, Bavarians, Alsatians, and a number of others. Some of your greatest thinkers have declared publicly that Germany is not a nation. You will admit that one qualification of a nation is a common language." He assented with a nod of the head. "This America has and Germany has not. You yourself told me yesterday that you couldn't understand a word the chauffeur said."

We frequently had visiting officers for dinner. I have sat at the table during so many of these boresome affairs, with six or a dozen present, that I often wonder how I stayed them out. It was seldom that any of the guests spoke English or French, and I was compelled to sit through the meal in silence. Nor could I disappear after dinner, for Rumelin considered that I was one of the hosts and that it was my duty to remain, look cheerful, and wait until the party broke up, usually about two o'clock in the morning.

I remember the day the Germans took Bucharest. That evening several officers were at the house and after dinner,

when we were sitting in the billiard room, Rumelin dashed in with a telegram, pounced upon me, and announced with joy, "We have taken Bucharest."

"That's no reason you should take me," I said, pushing him aside.

"Isn't that fine?" he persisted, and turning to a large map on the wall, he continued, "come here and I shall show you where the line is now."

"I don't care where it is, Captain," I retorted. "You know that. A big country like Germany shouldn't gloat over the ruin of a little spot like Roumania."

"We are going to celebrate by opening a bottle of champagne," said Rumelin, and he pressed a button for an orderly.

While the sparkling liquid was flowing, the discussion drifted to the relative merits of the large cities of Europe and America. One officer said that Berlin was the greatest metropolis, another considered Paris the center of the universe, and still another thought that New York outranked them all.

"There is only one place in the world, and that is London," said Hauptmann Count Wengersky, who had been the representative of the Hamburg-American Line in the British capital before the war. "There is only one place in London," he continued, "and that is the Savoy Hotel, and there is only one place in the Savoy Hotel, and that is the table in the southwest corner of the dining room, and," he triumphantly concluded, "that was always reserved for me."

This discussion recalled to my mind an incident I had once witnessed in which the wits of American sailors were



matched against those of German sailors. I told the story to the officers that evening, but their Teutonic minds failed fully to grasp the point.

I was in a café at Hankow in China a number of years before. A dozen or more American sailors from a United States gunboat anchored in the Yangtze were also there. They were at one end of the bar slowly consuming a round of drinks, and one or two were somewhat exhilarated. At the other end of the brass rail was congregated a group of German sailors, members of the crew of a small warship. They were casting contemptuous glances at the unconcerned Yankees. Soon one of the Americans noticed the distant and condescending attitude of the Germans. There was a minute of muttering and whispering among the bluejackets, and I knew that some mischievous scheme was being planned. Suddenly they turned toward the Germans and in unison shouted, "To hell with the Kaiser!" and laughingly resumed their drinking. The obviously furious Germans made no reply. Their faces became red and they stood like statues, dazed with amazement. The Americans again called out, "To hell with the Kaiser!" This was more than the Germans could stand. They had been insulted; their emperor had been the subject of disgraceful ridicule and disrespect. They drew together and conferred in low tones as to the action they should take. Again "To hell with the Kaiser!" came from the lusty throats of the Yankees. It now had become their slogan. The Germans immediately withdrew to a back room to continue their discussion in private.

The Americans remained at the bar, as calm as if they were at the mess-table aboard ship, while the Germans

were behind closed doors plotting revenge. In a few minutes there is going to be a fight, I thought. Another round of drinks was ordered, and the Yankee sailors laughed and talked, showing no evidence that they might be on the verge of a rough-and-tumble battle.

Suddenly the door of the back room opened. The German sailors filed in, two by two, and drew up six abreast in the middle of the floor. Their coats were off, their sleeves rolled up, and their caps had been left behind. Americans had the reputation of being hard scrappers and the Germans were prepared for a finish fight. The Yankees hardly noticed their assailants. The Germans advanced a few paces, faced the Americans and, with every nerve strained for the fray, defiantly shouted, "To hell with the President!"

The Americans turned slowly about and facetiously replied, "To hell with him, what do we care?"

The excitement was over. It was a joke instead of a fight.

On Christmas Day, Rumelin, Ludert, and I were guests at a dinner given by a German officer in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. To keep our engagement an hour's ride by automobile was necessary, and my men requested me to inform any official, inquisitive as to why we were so far from Longwy, that I was on an inspection tour. They were fearful of being caught using the army car for any other purpose.

At times it was amusing to note the way they sought cover behind the coat-tails of their American associate. They felt completely justified to be off the authorized beat if I were along. They frequently accompanied me to Brus-

sels where they had nothing to do but spend money and have a good time. We made many trips to Germany which only the wildest imagination could twist into a mission in any way connected with the work. The oberleutenant implored me to arrange to have the Commission send me to Constantinople to investigate food conditions in order that he might obtain permission from the Great Headquarters to chaperon me.

The Christmas dinner began at three o'clock in the afternoon and took place in a country house belonging to the plant of a large German slate quarry. The invited guests, besides Rumelin, Ludert, and myself, included three officers and a Luxembourg customs agent. During the meal the village priest came to join us. He was a German and had the conventional sacerdotal figure, weighing about two hundred and fifty pounds. He had not been invited but, being aware that a big dinner was taking place, he drifted in prepared to eat and drink his fill. He was a simple soul with a round fat face. When he wasn't stowing away food, he was grinning like a child, exhibiting an open mouth destitute of teeth.

Germans like to eat. That dinner was a vulgar display of solids and liquids. Dishes of every kind were released from the kitchen in such a steady procession that I bowed my head in shame to face such abundance when starving people were within a stone's throw. Oysters, soup, duck with trimmings, an entrée, pudding, fruit, cheese, wine, coffee, and cigars were spread before us and were consumed as though there was nothing else to do in this world but to eat, drink, and smoke.

We got up from the table at about eight o'clock, after

a session of nearly five hours. The dining room was cleared and a phonograph began bleating dance music. The officers seized one another and waltzed about the floor together, and the priest and I were left alone. I asked him to be my partner, and I shall never forget whirling that poor old fellow around the room. With his flat black hat—which he persisted in wearing—barely clinging to his bald head, and the skirt of his cassock flying in the air as we went at breakneck speed about the floor, he presented such a ridiculous sight that he nearly broke up the party. The old chap soon went home, and I heard later that he failed to arise in time to say mass the next morning.

After the dancing, the entertainment began to drag. To enliven the affair and to introduce a novelty, the host went to the stable and procured his favorite saddle-horse, which he brought into the house. He led the poor animal into the dining room and down a narrow hallway into the drawing-room. There the beast became so frightened that he plunged about, upsetting the tea table and breaking a dozen or more cups and saucers. To further entertain his guests the host went again to the barn for ideas, and this time returned with a pig which he let loose in the parlor.

“Why not transfer the party to the stable?” I suggested to Rumelin.





CHAPTER V

MEETING A MONARCH

THE severance of diplomatic relations by the United States made a profound impression on the Germans, and the forlorn hopes my officers had entertained that Mr. Wilson was a "reasonable man" and would not plunge America into the war were annihilated in their infancy. If the impression this event made upon Rumelin and Ludert may be considered a fair sample of the effect it created throughout Germany, there were millions of disheartened souls in the Fatherland. The rittmeister was so upset that he was confined to his bed for two days, the oberleutenant was as gloomy as a hearse, and the orderlies moped about the house as if the last card had been played. Their hopes rose again when President Wilson's appeal to the neutrals met at first with faint response, but they gradually subsided as one country after another joined the ranks of the Allies.

I was in Brussels on a week-end trip at the time of the diplomatic rupture. The six Americans from the districts of Occupied France and the thirty from the provinces of Belgium had arrived at the head office. Excitement and enthusiasm were at a high pitch. No one was disturbed, however, but each began planning what he was going to do when war was finally declared.

The Director of the Commission decided that we were to stay on the job as long as possible provided we in no way embarrassed the American government by so doing. The North-of-France delegates were given instructions to return to their posts. We all greeted the order with enthusiasm, for we anticipated an interesting sojourn with our German officers under the altered circumstances.

I boarded my train at the *Gare du Nord* at the usual

time and made my regular weekly five-hour trip through Belgium to Arlon. A secret service man with a German face stepped into my compartment and demanded my passports. I asked him to show his papers authorizing him to make such a request. This he did, and I produced my documents of identification. My train drew into Arlon. I stood in the vestibule of the coach, wondering what sort of a reception Ludert, who usually met me, would give me. I expected that he would greet me with a scowl instead of his customary smile and was convinced that I was destined to have a disagreeable and uncomfortable week under the roof of the enemy.

The station platform was crowded with officers. I dropped off my train, not knowing what was coming next. The orderly took my bag. Oberleutenant Ludert and Lieutenant Finkler, a visiting officer whom I knew, came running toward me.

“Our new enemy, how are you?” they shouted joyously, tapping me on the back with their swagger sticks.

I was bewildered. It was the most cordial and enthusiastic reception I had had on returning from any of my week-end trips. It took place under the window of the compartment in the car where the secret service man was sitting and, as I glanced at him, he seemed completely stupefied. The fifty officers on the platform stood aghast to see such familiarity with an American, and I suggested that we hustle out of the station before I was mobbed.

At the house in Longwy, Rittmeister Rumelin greeted me like a returning brother. When I entered, the orderlies came to attention with the usual clap of their heels, and the sergeant shook hands with me as cordially as ever.

The two officers and I sat down to tea, as was our custom.

"Well, Captain, what has happened in Longwy since I was here?" I asked.

"About thirty officers have called me up to inquire what I was going to do with my American," he replied.

"What did you say?"

"I told them that we had rented a theater and were going to shoot him in public and charge five marks admission," said Rumelin, his face beaming and displaying an expression of anticipation of what I thought of his response.

"That's a cheerful prospect," I remarked.

Rumelin then told me that the President of the French Committee, on hearing that I was to be disposed of in this manner, said that he wanted *un morceau*, for he was tired of eating *viande de cheval* and wished to try some *viande Americaine*.

We speculated about the war. I suggested that in the event it was actually declared the members of the Commission for Relief should occupy the same trench and put up a sign emblazoned with the letters C. R. B. so the Germans would not shoot at it. I added that when aiming my gun at a German, if I recognized him to be Rumelin, I would turn it on the next man. If he proved to be Ludert, I would let him live and pick off the third.

"You will have to be careful," said the rittmeister. "The third man might be Haas." Haas was the simple and faithful orderly of Rumelin. To kill him would be as heartless as taking the life of the old family horse.

After two weeks in the camp of the enemy, I returned to Brussels. The German authorities would allow the

Americans to return to their districts in the North of France only on the condition that they remain at their posts for a period of three months, not going to Brussels weekly as had been the custom. It was out of the question to accept such a stipulation. Negotiations for a reasonable arrangement failed, and the six Americans from the French districts applied for passports to leave the occupied territories. After several weeks' delay, the documents were issued, and Oberleutenant Ludert was delegated to conduct us safely out of Belgium to Switzerland.

Our train was to leave Brussels at eleven o'clock at night, and a crowd was on hand to see us off. A hundred Belgians, several German officers, and a score of Americans were rushing frantically to and fro hastily shaking the hands of the parting North-of-France delegates. It was an extraordinary human mixture and an event which impressed itself indelibly upon the memory of everyone who participated. The station was a scene of turmoil. The casual observer might have thought it was the initial move in a general revolt throughout the country.

We were shoved through the platform gates, past the German sentinels who had no opportunity to examine our passports, and dashed toward the Lille-to-Cologne Express, leaning out of every window of which were officers and soldiers. After the train was under way, we began to collect ourselves. Maurice of New York, one-time editor of *The Bookman*, had lost his hat in the confusion; and Percy, poet and son of a former United States Senator from Mississippi, was entirely missing. When we arrived at Louvain, the poet was discovered in another coach guarding our combined luggage which had been promiscu-

ously thrown into the wrong car. Maurice never found his hat.

We occupied two compartments, while half a dozen German officers stood in the corridor with the prospect of remaining upright all night. We proposed to Ludert that one compartment be turned over to the officers and that our party of eight go into the other. He at first refused, stating that he was under orders from the Great Headquarters and had a certain prestige to maintain. We persuaded him otherwise, however, and the Germans were very grateful.

Sleep was not the order of the night. With two suit-cases serving as a table, we played poker all the way to Cologne. The only man to doze off in spite of the excitement of the game was Maverick of Texas, famous for being in the Serbian retreat with the American diplomatic corps and as a member of the family that has put the word *maverick* in the dictionary.

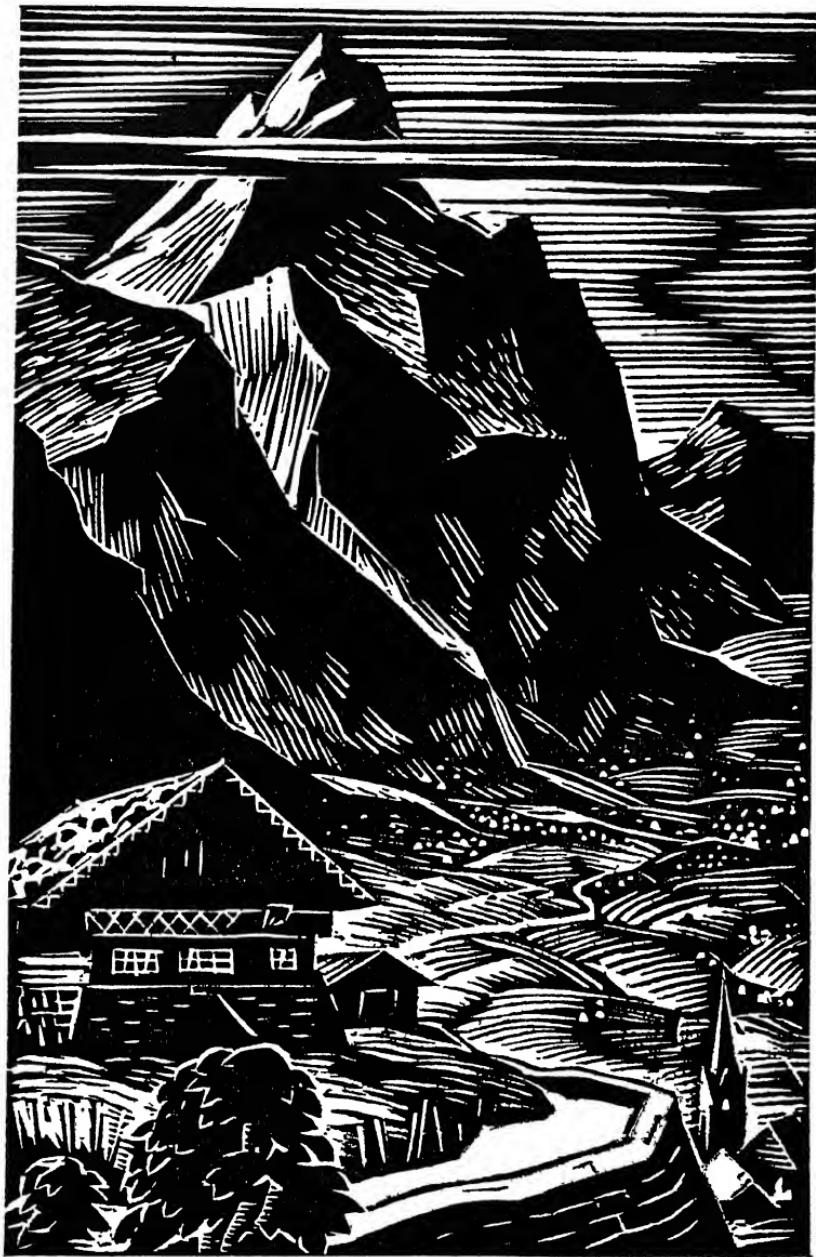
A drowsy lot of Americans drifted into the Dom Hotel at six o'clock that morning. The great spires of the famous Cologne Cathedral towered dimly above us in the hazy dawn, and the chimes sang their mellow notes as we silently trooped across the square from the station to the hotel. A sad set we were, as we sat at the table eating a German war-time breakfast of milkless coffee sweetened with a pill of saccharin, a morsel of bread, and a suggestion of jam, supplemented by hard-boiled eggs and children's biscuits which we had brought from Belgium. Phil Potter, New Yorker, art critic, actor, and musician ate ten men's rations and left the table stuffed to the limit. He departed from the hotel feeling somewhat uncomfortable

but with an air of satisfaction for, as he stated, he considered that he had aided the Allied cause by reducing Germany's food supply, even if only by a few mouthfuls.

Ludert was a fine conductor and did everything possible to facilitate the trip. He telegraphed ahead to each point of change along the route to arrange for the transfer of our baggage and, on the whole, directed our exit with the efficiency of a tourist agent. When we arrived at Singen, on the German-Swiss frontier, we discovered that Hauptmann Count Wengersky, chief of the *Vernflegungsdienst*—or feeding division—at Charleville, had wired announcing our coming.

The examination by the military authorities at this point, which we had anticipated gravely and which we expected would be most severe, was as simple as if we were crossing from Brooklyn to New York. Dr. Leach, of San Francisco and Lille, was the only member of the party who aroused any suspicion, and the officials attempted to strip him of all the watches, gold medals, and souvenirs he had gathered from the generous Belgians and French in recognition of his services. Fortunately, Ludert came to his rescue and prevailed upon the authorities to allow him to pass with his loot.

Switzerland was a welcome sight, and we soon arrived in Berne. That evening we gave a dinner to Ludert and it was one of the most bang-up repasts I have ever attended. Kittredge of San Francisco, Rhodes scholar, linguist, and expert caterer, was the master of ceremonies. He is as much at home with a menu card in his hand as a mermaid in water, and he ordered food and drink with such taste and recklessness that the bill was big enough



to threaten the solvency of us all. We assembled in a private dining room of a hotel and ate that good meal like men who had never seen food. The affair was concluded by presenting the oberleutenant with a large silver cigarette case, engraved with our signatures and bearing the following inscription: "To Oberleutenant Ludert in memory of the Brussels to Berne trip, March, 1917." He had done a good job and we appreciated it.

After three days in Switzerland, Ludert returned to Belgium and we continued our journey to Paris.

My brief stay in the French capital afforded me the only occasion that I have ever had to be received by a potentate. An invitation to an audience with a king is not to be taken lightly in these days of royal remnants, so when such an opportunity presented itself, I seized it with avidity.

Potter and I were at Fouquet's Café on the *Champs Elysées*, casually chatting with one another. A Frenchman, overhearing us, stepped up and introduced himself. His name was Boggiano and he said he was a second cousin of President Poincaré. He was interested when he learned that we had just come from Occupied France and asked us many questions about conditions there. After a short talk, he pounced upon the idea of presenting us to the King of Montenegro who, since the invasion of his country, had resided in Neuilly on the outskirts of Paris. The Frenchman pressed the proposal and, requesting us to include all of the members of the Commission then in the city, finally selected Fouquet's Café as the place at which we were to assemble on the following Sunday.

Boggiano was one of those men-about-town whom all

cities seem to possess. He was attached to the reportorial staff of *Le Petit Parisien*, had plenty of money to spend, and his hospitality knew no bounds. His mind was full of the most fantastic schemes, and all his projects appeared to be in one way or another connected with America and Americans. His plans were all designed to strengthen the relations between the United States and France, and to express French appreciation for the work Americans had done in the occupied territories. However, many of his schemes were far from practicable, and only the wildest dreamer or the most imaginative person could have concocted them.

He informed us that he was calling upon all the merchants on the *Avenue de l'Opéra* soliciting the affixing of their signatures to a petition requesting the municipal authorities to change the name of the famous thoroughfare to President Wilson Street. At the same time, he was organizing a movement to transfer Rodin's well-known statue, *Le Penseur*—at that time in front of the Pantheon—across the Atlantic as a gift to America, to be placed before the new Red Cross building in Washington. It was his idea that he himself was to have charge of transporting the work of art, and he intended to go to the United States to see it properly installed. His third fancy was to have the Americans who had been in the invaded districts of France remain in Paris to direct the provisioning of the city. He went so far as to discuss this matter with the municipal officials who evidently displayed no more enthusiasm over the proposal than we did. His supreme ambition, however, was to represent Montenegro at the Peace

Conference, and this desire accounted for his close relationship with King Nicholas.

On Sunday morning, eight Americans gathered at Fouquet's Café to meet Boggiano who, in the meantime, had made arrangements for an audience with His Majesty. We were not dressed in morning coats, nor was there a silk hat in the crowd. Calling on kings was not our business. Our French conductor did not come on time, and it appeared as though we were the victims of a practical joke.

Boggiano finally arrived, however, and in two taxicabs we started for Neuilly. We soon drew up to a huge iron gate opening on to a roadway leading to the mansion in which the King was living. A man unlocked the gate, and we sauntered in toward the house. A dozen Montenegrans soldiers and a score of secret service men approached us with such suspicion that we almost feared to go any further. These men were physical giants, and their faces were as hard as the countenances of veteran criminals. To them we looked like a band of anarchists, each with a bomb concealed under his overcoat, intent upon assassinating the poor King. As we moved toward the entrance of the château, these fellows closed in on us and their leader brusquely asked us what we wanted. Boggiano explained that we were Americans and that we had an audience with His Majesty. He soon convinced them that our mission was a bona fide one, and he alone was permitted to go in to see the King. We remained in the small courtyard before the house conversing with the Montenegrans, a number of whom spoke English and French.

Soon we were on a friendly basis with them, and their suspicions vanished.

Boggiano was closeted with the monarch for fully thirty minutes, and all indications seemed to be that we Americans would be refused admission. Finally the large main doors of the château were opened, and a servant asked us to enter. We filed in, one by one, placed our hats and overcoats in the hall, and were conducted into an adjoining room where Boggiano informed us that His Majesty was ready to receive us.

Five minutes of silence and suspense passed. Then the King came in, wheezing like a gasoline engine, for the poor man had a severe case of asthma. Some of us expected to see the traditional story-book monarch wearing a crown and a regal robe and sitting on a throne. Instead, there sat before us, in a modestly-upholstered chair, a man of eighty years of age dressed in a black frock coat, with a small skullcap on the back of his head. He was very tall and had a large mustache and was of a dark complexion.

He greeted us most cordially and apologized for sitting down, remarking with a smile that he was a little older than we were. He was very much interested in the relief work in France and Belgium and asked us many questions with the view of applying the information to the feeding of his Montenegrin subjects.

We stood before him like a crowd on a street corner. Maverick of Texas, who knew French well, was our spokesman, each of us taking a turn at putting in an occasional word. The King was especially interested in

the quantities and rations of the food which were distributed in Occupied France.

At this point, Exton of Ohio nudged me and whisperingly inquired, "Have you a piece of paper?"

I handed him a slip which I tore from my notebook, and he began scribbling some figures with a pencil.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Writing down the rations for the King," he replied.

"Don't give him that scrap of paper. This man is a potentate. Tell him that you will write him a report," I said quietly.

Exton agreed, and putting the slip of paper in his pocket, told the King that we would prepare a complete statement giving all figures and information.

Two members of His Majesty's government stood at one end of the small room and listened in silence. The King was very deaf and naturally had trouble in hearing what we said. Moreover, as he spoke French with a very pronounced accent, we could hardly understand him. As a result, the interview was conducted with considerable difficulty.

We had been in the room about fifteen minutes when I thought it was time to go.

I whispered to Exton at my right, "We should be leaving. We have been here long enough."

"You said that this bird was a potentate. He decides when we shall go," he responded under his breath.

Finally His Majesty rose and shook hands with each one of us, thanking us for coming and for the information we had given him.

We filed out. I was the first to pass the door, and I shook hands with the porter, bidding him a cordial farewell. All my colleagues followed suit, and in consequence the poor man was almost overcome with astonishment. From King to doorkeeper was too large a mental jump for him. We poured out of the château, through the gate to the sidewalk where we waited for Boggiano, who remained a few minutes with His Majesty. When he joined us, he announced that the King thought that we were a fine lot of young men with kind, honest faces. He had decided to decorate us all!

Exton's report had to be written. It was the old case of everybody's job being nobody's job. Weeks passed by and nothing was done. Finally Dr. Leach took it upon himself to draw up the document. One evening he gave it to me to be typed, suggesting that I revise it if I deemed it necessary.

Although my experience in writing to royalty had been nil, I felt compelled to make a number of drastic alterations in Leach's epistle, for his salutation was uncommonly familiar and his conclusion was couched in almost intimate terms. I don't recall the exact wording of his draft but its initial greeting was closely associated to "Dear King" and his final phrase was suggestive of "So long." The revised document was addressed to "His Majesty" and terminated with an appropriate finale.

It was sent to Boggiano with the suggestion that he make any further changes necessary in order that it should conform to the rules of correspondence with royalty, and with the request that he transmit it to the King. This he did, and I received the following cordial response from

the Director of the Department of Interior (translated from French):

Kingdom of Montenegro
Ministry of Interior.

Sir, Neuilly, May 11th, 1917.

I have the honor to bring to your knowledge that I have remitted to His Majesty, my august sovereign, the report concerning the feeding of an invaded district that you have kindly sent to me by the intermediary of Mr. Boggiano.

His Majesty has given me the agreeable task of expressing his warmest thanks.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my high consideration,

The Director,

Mr. Alfred C. B. Fletcher, C. C. Kauunowvlit.

36 bis Avenue de l'Opéra, Paris.

The Americans who had the privilege of this audience with the King of Montenegro felt highly complimented, and we appreciated Mr. Kauunowvlit's gracious letter. His Majesty's knowledge of the relief work in the districts of France and the provinces of Belgium was a surprise to us, and we were pleased with the great interest he showed in all we told him.





CHAPTER VI

AN UNCONVENTIONAL TOUR

ONE of the world's most unconventional travellers is Monsieur Jean Dubois, a former *Commissaire du Gouvernement Belge*, ardent Socialist, and close friend of the author. His appearance is unique, his speech most amusing, and his personality complex. These characteristics, coupled with his unquestioned honesty, unmatched frankness, and unlimited courage, furnish him with the equipment to travel in a very unusual manner.

He is a tall, powerful, middle-aged man with a pox-marked face. Attired in his flat broad-brimmed black hat, cocked at a precarious angle on the back of his head, and his long-tailed, dark coat, he has the appearance of having just stepped from the pages of Dickens. His sentences are a perfect mixture of French, Flemish, and English and are usually spluttered out with the utmost vehemence. With these distinctions he is conspicuous enough, but when he gets into action, both in elocution and gesticulation, he at once has all eyes fixed on him and soon is the center of an admiring throng, captivated by his unusual but attractive personality.

After leaving Paris, I continued with the Commission for Relief in Belgium, working in England and Holland until the Armistice, when I was transferred to Belgium. I had completed my duties as Director of the Antwerp Office and had become the European representative of an American firm. Shortly after this transition I had the good fortune to accompany Dubois on a six weeks' trip to a number of the capitals of the continent. As an example of a conventional tour, it was a complete failure.

A few months after the war, the Belgian Government found itself with a surplus of wheat on hand and accord-

ingly decided to dispose of it by sale to the less fortunate countries of Central Europe. It was on this mission that Dubois and I set out. Our first objective was Warsaw, where we hoped to sell several thousand tons to the newly-formed Polish government.

Dubois was a man of extremes; one minute he was bubbling over with good humor, and the next he was lost in a maze of anger, tirading vociferously about some trivial matter. He began this trip in a happy mood. On our way to the station, we saw a passer-by with a pox-marked countenance. "That man's face and mine would make a good waffle iron," he joked.

It was not until the next day, when travelling on a Polish train, that he began his antics in earnest. As we entered the dining car, much to my surprise, he introduced himself to the head waiter as "Jean Dubois, *Commissaire du Gouvernement Belge*," and in a loud voice repeated the announcement to all the passengers at the adjoining tables, explaining that he and I were on our way to Warsaw to sell Belgian surplus wheat to the Polish government. During the entire meal he indulged in a dissertation, gesticulating most freely with his knife in one hand and his fork in the other, rising from the table to expound by violent physical demonstrations the intricacies and private details of our business, and pacing the length of the aisle of the car to make sure that none of his auditors missed a word.

This comedy, which delighted our numerous fellow-travellers, suddenly became a near-tragedy when the waiter presented Dubois with a bill in Polish marks for his lunch. As he had only Belgian francs in his possession,

an argument immediately arose as to the rate of exchange, and nothing the placatory head waiter said would satisfy my garrulous and controversial friend. The more the waiter expostulated with him, the more unreasonable Dubois became. The conductor was summoned to settle the dispute; several passengers made efforts to intervene with the hope of reaching a satisfactory agreement, but all their combined endeavors only increased my companion's obstinacy and anger. I finally left the scene and returned to my compartment, for I felt confident that my friend would soon emerge triumphant from the tangle.

I had been interestedly reading a book for about an hour when Dubois appeared, grinning from ear to ear.

"How did you settle that mess?" I asked.

"All right," he replied. "Shortly after you left, I gave everyone in the dining car a Corona cigar and we all became friends immediately. We have been chatting amicably ever since."

The fact that our train was three hours late gave him the pretext for his next unusual maneuver. He was extremely irritated at this delay and sat in an apparent stupor for an hour devising means, as he afterwards explained, whereby we could make up time and reach Warsaw according to schedule. Without divulging his plans to me, he started through the train with his hat in hand to take up a collection from the passengers. In a short time, he had accumulated a sum of several thousand Polish marks. When the train stopped at the next station, he approached the locomotive engineer with this sum and promised to give him the entire amount if he pulled us into Warsaw on time. The engineer agreed to the bargain,

but not until my friend had sufficiently impressed him with his importance by announcing that he was "Jean Dubois, *Commissaire du Government Belge*, supplementing this statement with a harangue about the momentous nature of his mission. We then began our race against time, and that Polish train went faster than any Polish train had ever gone before. It flew along the track, rushing past stations at which, I imagined, it was supposed to stop, and finally arrived in Warsaw only a little late but early enough to satisfy the pride of the Belgian Commissioner.

We registered at the Bristol Hotel and Dubois immediately began a repetition of his antics of the previous day. He seemed possessed with the idea that he should explain our mission to everyone, from bell boy to hotel manager, as well as to all the guests. On approaching the desk clerk, he announced in the presence of a dozen bystanders that he was "Jean Dubois, *Commissaire du Government Belge*." Before the bewildered hotel man could gag him, he had given a full account of all our hopes and expectations while in the city of Warsaw. He was more efficient than a broadcasting station, for he reported almost hourly to the bell boys and waiters the progress we were, or were not, making in our negotiations with the Polish government.

One evening during our stay in the Polish capital, a resident friend and I dined at the American Legation as guests of the Minister. Before going, we conducted Dubois to the Municipal Theater where he was to hear grand opera, of which he was very fond and about which he was apparently well informed, for he was a member of the



Belgian Royal Opera Commission appointed by the king. He was much upset the next day on learning that I had had dinner with the American Minister and that he had not been invited, for he said he knew the Minister well.

I had to depart on short notice for Vienna and arranged to meet Dubois a few days later in Prague. Before leaving, I explained to my Warsaw friend the great disappointment of my travelling companion at not having been included among the guests at the Legation dinner, and I urged him to do his best to persuade the Minister to invite Dubois before his departure. My friend agreed and I went on my way to Vienna, looking forward to full reports of Dubois' conduct at the Legation, for I now felt that he was capable of anything.

At the Czecho-Austrian frontier, my train stopped for the examination of passports. It was four o'clock in the morning and, not wishing to be disturbed from my slumbers, I handed my papers to a young American Jewish relief worker with whom I was sharing the compartment, requesting him to present them to the officials. I then dozed off, only to be awakened a few minutes later by my acquaintance who informed me that my passport, which had been retained by the government agents, was not in order, as I had failed to obtain a visé from the Warsaw police.

From under my pillow I drew a Belgian twenty-franc note, a substantial sum when converted into Austrian crowns, and suggested that the relief worker try this as a substitute for a visé with the frontier officials. Again he returned, to inform me that my monetary argument was

of no avail and that I could not pass but must get off the train and make arrangements by telegraph.

I slumbered once more, but suddenly aroused to realize the situation in which I was. I went to the door of the compartment, thrust out my head, and saw a pile of papers on a seat at the end of the corridor. I emerged, hastily looked through the lot, retrieved my passport and, returning with it to my berth, I was soon as sound asleep as a baby.

I arrived in Vienna without further disturbance. The custodian of the passports had left them unprotected for a second, and I had appeared at the psychological moment!

A few days later I met Dubois in Prague, according to arrangement, and he reported the result of our negotiations to sell wheat to the Polish government. After much discussion, the Warsaw authorities had decided to place the matter in the hands of their Paris representative, whom they had promised to instruct to meet us in Antwerp for the purpose of transacting the business. Dubois had not a word to say about having had dinner at the American Legation in Warsaw and I had to continue in a state of suspense until I heard from my friend there.

Our mission in Prague was similar to the one in the Polish capital, but long before we started our negotiations with the proper authorities of the Czechoslovakian government, I believe all taxicab drivers and bootblacks in the city were familiar with the object of our sojourn. In addition to announcing to the hotel clerks the fact that he was "Jean Dubois, *Commissaire du Gouvernement Belge*," with full explanations, he shook hands with all the chauffeurs at the stand in front of the hotel and gave

them a brief but accurate account of the purpose of our trip. When in the dining room the first evening, he promptly made friends with all the musicians in the orchestra and informed them with admirable thoroughness of our hopes and ambitions. Between courses he left me stranded at the table while he trudged two-thirds of the way across the room to advise them of any phase of our work he had neglected to mention. Each day, as we entered the hotel, he paused for a minute to inform the door porter of the measure of success with which we were meeting.

The upshot of negotiations in Prague was no more satisfactory than that of our Warsaw experience. The Czech authorities finally referred us to their London representative, whom they suggested we should interview personally. (I did not then know how personal this interview would be.) Thus far our endeavors had been more or less unsuccessful, and I could only attribute this result to Dubois' faculty of proclaiming our private affairs from the housetops.

With this verdict of the Czechs, we decided to return to Belgium and from there continue our efforts. However, before taking our leave from the Prague hotel, Dubois gave a final detailed report to his friend, the door porter, who could be fully relied upon to disseminate the news to all the amused and curious waiters, musicians, cab-drivers, and other associates of the hostelry.

Upon arriving in Antwerp, I found a letter awaiting me from my Warsaw friend, explaining the catastrophe in connection with my suggestion that Dubois be invited to dine at the Legation. In Dubois' presence he had

telephoned the proposal to the American Minister, who had replied something to the effect that he would gladly invite anyone my friend desired with the one exception of my travelling companion, and that he would explain fully when they next met. This he did that evening.

Dubois had killed his dinner chances at the opera the night we were the Minister's guests. The Belgian Commissioner apparently ran riot on that occasion, judging from the reports which reached the American Legation. Before the opera began, he rose from his seat and introduced himself to the audience in his usual form, stating that he was "Jean Dubois, *Commissaire du Government Belge*," and in addition proclaiming that he was a close friend of the American Minister at Warsaw. To complete his eruption, he further announced that he was a member of the Belgian Royal Opera Commission and proceeded to demonstrate his musical knowledge and vocal ability by accompanying the various singers in their parts!

Our wild chase was not yet at an end. We arrived in Antwerp late on Sunday evening. I had an appointment with Dubois in Brussels the next afternoon at one o'clock. When I met him, he was in a state of great agitation. He insisted that we take the first train for Paris. Several of his Belgian coworkers in the government had gone to the French capital to interview the Polish representative, and he feared they would sell the wheat while we would be left in the lurch and would thereby become a general laughingstock.

Soon after two o'clock, we were speeding on our way on the Amsterdam-Paris express. In our possession we had not an ounce of luggage, not even one toothbrush between

us, for we had not had time to return to our homes in Antwerp before departing. We arrived in Paris at half past eight in the evening and by pure accident ran into the Belgian delegation on the crowded *Boulevard des Italiens*. Immediately a gesticulating uproar took place as the five Belgians indulged in a most slanderous debate in Flemish which attracted a small crowd. I eased toward the curb in search of a comfortable and inconspicuous spot. The delegates informed Dubois that they had seen the Polish representative and that he was not in the least interested in purchasing wheat; whereupon my associate angrily replied that it was not their business to interfere in the matter. For an hour or more, words in a tongue unknown to me and to the Parisian bystanders flew thick and fast.

When they all finally became physically and mentally exhausted, Dubois and I continued on our way. The effort of his coworkers only served to steel his determination, and he vowed to me he would sell wheat to the Poles if he never did another thing the rest of his life. We registered at the Grand Hotel where, undaunted by the recent quarrel with his compatriots, he announced himself to the desk as "Jean Dubois, *Commissaire du Gouvernement Belge*," supplementing this hackneyed statement with his customary explanation of the purpose of our presence in Paris.

The following morning, while the members of the Belgian delegation were returning to Brussels, Dubois and I called upon the Paris agent of the Polish government and had a most encouraging interview with him. Dubois was a persuasive talker in his odd way and he convinced the Pole of the wisdom of buying Belgian wheat. We departed

from his office with a promise that he would communicate with us soon. Within a week, Dubois received an order from the Polish government for twenty thousand tons!

We next directed our efforts to the Czech representative in London, whom we saw in the British capital. He was not interested in wheat but said that his government might want some flour in the course of a few weeks.

As Dubois had no flour to sell, I became the salesman and pursued the Czech. A fortnight later he was due in The Hague, and I haunted the Central Hotel until his arrival. He was in the market for a large quantity, and I was determined to make the sale if it were humanly possible. On the day he was scheduled to arrive, I inquired several times for him at the hotel. Finally I was informed that he had registered and was in his room. I ascended posthaste and found him in the bathtub, a much embarrassed man, his face almost completely obscured by lather. I couldn't afford to let the opportunity go by, for a dozen competitors were in the lounge downstairs waiting to pounce upon him as soon as he appeared. I was most persistent and negotiated with the poor man while he sat in the tub and scrubbed himself. At last he agreed to buy ten thousand tons of flour, but whether this order was elicited by my convincing powers, or was prompted by his desire to get rid of me, or was due to his natural modesty, I shall never know. I retired completely satisfied, but I couldn't smother a feeling of sympathy, mingled with elation, for my competitors as I passed them in the corridor.

When I saw Dubois, he was in a happy mood and congratulated me on my achievement. The next instant, how-

ever, he became angry with me over some trivial matter. When I firmly told him that he was acting like a baby, he placed his hand on my arm and apologetically explained that he was a peculiar mixture, up in the clouds one minute and down in the depths the next.

“Je suis un drôle de coco,” he concluded, indicating that he thoroughly understood his own eccentricities.

Jean Dubois conducted business in a most unusual manner, but he understood every phase of the grain trade and those with whom he dealt fully realized this. He generally obtained whatever he went after. He is hardly my idea of a model travelling companion, for his methods are too chronically hectic. No one, however, could classify him as a stereotyped tourist.





CHAPTER VII

THE LAND OF THE MIKADO

GOOD fortune now found me on the other side of the world. Better fortune found me travelling with a wife whom I had acquired in the United States, the best place for an American to procure such an admirable addendum. My friend who had advised me years before to keep moving, on hearing of my imminent marriage, asked me with amazement, "Young man, do you realize what such a step means?"

"I think I do," I replied.

"Your mobility will be immediately reduced fifty per cent," he informed me.

"I am fully aware of that," I said, "but we are leaving for the Orient the day after the wedding. Once out there, there is always a reasonable prospect of some day returning, so that much travel is unquestionably assured."

I had returned to the United States after a sojourn of about five years in Europe, during which time I had spent several months in England, more than a year in Holland, two years in Belgium, nearly a year in France, and had made many trips to Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. With New York as my headquarters, I continued to move and radiated from Manhattan Island to various points within a reasonable distance. I made a trip to New England which included excursions into Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Connecticut. I explored New Jersey, had a glimpse of Pennsylvania, and finally went to Washington and Virginia. At the end of several months spent on the Atlantic seaboard, I crossed the continent to California with my newly-acquired wife. The Golden State was a familiar

tramping ground to me, and we visited some of its famous high spots which I had not seen for many years.

“Nothing is more wholesome than to keep going,” said Voltaire, and he followed his own advice by travelling extensively in Europe. The doctrine of “Keep moving” was still my slogan. Less than half a year after my arrival in New York from Europe, we sailed out of the Golden Gate bound for the Orient. We were on board the *S. S. Taiyo Maru* which was carrying a full list of several hundred first-class passengers.

The entire Japanese delegation, returning from the Washington Conference, occupied the greater number of the cabins. Admiral Baron Kato, the chief of the contingent and later Prime Minister of Japan, was the most notable of the group; and Mr. Hanahara, subsequently the Emperor’s ambassador at Washington, was another shining light. The baron remained in seclusion throughout the voyage, but he was conspicuous on account of the fact that a perfect double of his was all over the ship at all hours of the day and night. Not until the real baron appeared in person at the captain’s dinner the night before our arrival in Yokohama did I, and many other passengers, realize that he had a counterpart on board. Mr. Hanahara was jolly and a good sport. He was in every activity on the ship and a popular winner or loser in deck events, in the majority of which he took part.

The presence of Baron Kato on the ship made our landing at Yokohama an unusual one. Owing to considerable disapproval among the masses in Japan resulting from the action the statesman had taken at the Washington Conference, every provision was made to insure his safety.

Our steamer anchored in the bay where she remained an entire day, while high and unusually uniformed and generously decorated officials came aboard to greet the admiral and his party. At the same time precautions were taken for the landing of the baron and his retinue. Conspicuous among those who welcomed the diplomat was old Admiral Togo, of Russo-Japanese War fame, whom I thought had long before passed to the Great Beyond. He was there, however, and as important and as active as ever in spite of the fact that he had first seen the light of day in 1847.

My friend's gloomy prediction about my mobility as a married man was already turning out to be false; for since assuming this happy state, I was well on my way toward my second trip around the globe.

A woman is expected to be a more conventional being than a man. She usually has less of the spirit of adventure, is born with an aversion to taking unnecessary chances, likes as much comfort as possible, and has a particular abhorrence of uncleanliness. It is always difficult to venture away from the homestead hearth with the assurance of finding modern conveniences, fashionable comfort, and immaculate conditions awaiting one with open arms. The happy medium between water-front lodgings and glorified hotels was the solution, with which my wife was in unflinching accord, thus affording as much contact with native life as would be in conformity with reasonable cleanliness and favorable health conditions.

This medium course proved to be most satisfactory to my wife. However, she took many precautions and accordingly travelled equipped with a number of articles,

including a pair of sheets and a small pillow to replace those furnished by certain hotels and trains and a collection of disinfectants to purify the washbasins and bathtubs. She was most particular to avoid uncooked vegetables and usually called for bottled water in preference to the natural product of the country. I was only mildly cautious, always taking the hotel linen as I found it and leaving all antiseptic activities to my wife.

The spirit of Japan had changed greatly since my visit of ten years before. Everyone knows that Commodore Perry's expedition was the agency which introduced the ideas of Occidental nations to Japan, but the World War had quickened in the Island Empire a desire to return to many of its old customs and institutions. The European conflict had also affected Japan in the same manner as it had all other countries of the world. Perhaps the change most noticeable to an outsider was the advance in the cost of living. Prices at the first-class foreign hotels in Yokohama and Tokyo were on a par with those of the leading ones in New York, and ricksha fares were almost as high as taxicab tariffs in the United States.

The greatest transformation, however, was apparent in the outlook of the people, particularly in regard to their attitude toward the customs, institutions, and policies of the Western World. Japan had seen the chaos in Europe and the threatening collapse of Occidental civilization as the result of the strain of the Great War. The European debacle had made her skeptical and had caused her to look with a higher regard upon the Oriental—and particularly the Japanese—way of doing things. This new attitude was evident at every turn. She lost her profound respect



for the Occidental economic system when she saw European exchanges crumble one after another while those of the Orient remained stable. Coupled with this disdain was a suspicion of the Far Eastern policy of Western nations. All these changes were manifest in the altered attitude of the people.

The old-time etiquette of the masses, especially in the large cities, was passing away, and foreigners were treated with less consideration and civility than formerly. There was a movement to offset the tendency, so marked a few years ago, to adopt Western customs and costumes. In consequence, happily, foreign clothes were worn much less. Officials and business men were turning to their native kimonos and sandals which some of them had discarded when exotic influence was at its height. The government was discouraging the use of rickshas, an infernal invention of a missionary, and these vehicles were nearly as rare in some places as hansom cabs in New York City.

Even the native inns were not immune. On my former visit, a Japanese hotel was an institution of economy where one could get a room and meals for a few *yen* a day, the equivalent of two to four dollars in American currency, depending upon the accommodation. Now the rates of the leading hotels in the large cities are comparable with those in large communities in the United States, and the prices charged by more modest inns are correspondingly high.

From Tokyo we telegraphed to a middle-class hostelry in Kyoto, making reservations. Our train arrived late in the evening, and we were met at the station by a porter who didn't know a word of English. Without hesitation,

he miraculously picked us out of a crowd of more than a hundred passengers and, stowing us in a couple of rickshas, conducted us in safety to our destination.

Scores of times I had been a guest of Japanese hotels, country inns, and large city hostelries; but this was my wife's first experience. Fortunately, on this occasion we had selected one in which the heavy foot of a foreigner had never trodden before. The proprietor so informed us the next day when telling us what an honor it was for him to have us under his roof.

The inn was a charming little edifice approached through a small garden courtyard and surrounding a delightful inner court in which a fountain played on slips of bamboo plants and lily pads. According to custom, our shoes were removed and were replaced by slippers from the assortment provided for the guests. We shuffled inside and climbed to our quarters, up stairs so steep that a ladder would have been more practical. The apartment was as destitute of garniture as a newborn babe of teeth, but its mere simplicity was an attraction. A picture and a vase holding a single sprig were the sole adornments. The furniture dealers of the country must be a poverty-stricken lot, for the only object which could be attributed to their trade was a small stool-like writing contraption elevated about three inches on frail and highly-decorated legs.

That night we slept on the matted floor in quilts and other accessories taken from cupboards concealed behind the paper walls of the room. We were awakened in the morning by a tap on our door and in came the proprietor who, falling immediately to his knees, greeted us most cordially in a mixture of dictionary English and Japanese.

Simply to greet us was not sufficient, for he insisted upon discussing all the political, economic, and social questions of the day. I came to the conclusion that he was looking for a free lesson in English.

My wife, who was naturally overcome by the thought of conversing with a hotel-keeper in such an informal manner, wouldn't budge until he had made his exit. I finally expelled the intruder by a request that he conduct me to the bathroom.

I had cleared the way for my wife, only to obstruct it for myself. When she began to stir, a group of maids, or *nesans*, immediately pattered in to lend assistance and generally to get in the way. When I returned, attired in a flimsy native kimono, these delightful-looking fairies confronted me. They showed no signs of going but stood by, evidently waiting for me to remove my robe so that they could assist me in donning my garments. This sort of game couldn't go on forever, so I gave an imitation of a man eating, in the hope they would depart to get our breakfast and thereby give me an opportunity to array myself hastily. They understood my manifestations, but only one waddled away to fetch the food. The other little maids persisted in staying. However, I managed to extricate myself modestly from this astonishing predicament on the suggestion of my wife; while she engaged the attention of the domestics, I tumbled into sufficient garments to be presentable.

Rudyard Kipling was among the first to describe the frankness and problems of a Japanese bathroom, and a number of other writers have added their contributions to this important subject. Bathing is a function so essen-

tial to our general well-being that if any new light can be thrown upon the matter, even if it is Japanese bath procedure, it is the duty of the conscientious scribe to do his part.

The habit of daily bathing is not confined to one-hundred-per-cent Americans. Boston may justly lay claim to the fact that she has more bathtubs per capita than any other city in the world, but I think the average Japanese community can easily outstrip the most immaculate American center in the number of actual ablutions per population. Bathtubs are a taxable luxury in Japan, and only the wealthy have such fixtures in their houses. The bulk and file of the people resort daily to the public bath-houses which are numbered by the thousands in the large cities.

All hotels are equipped with the proper paraphernalia and incidental trappings with which guests may cleanse themselves to their hearts' content. In the bathroom, regardless of sex or age, they assemble each evening to scrub away in their native state most unconcernedly. They are as indifferent to observation as some Americans are when chewing gum in a subway train. The room is generally spacious. It is plentifully equipped with running water and small basins or dippers with which the bathers rinse themselves. In one corner is a cement or wooden tub containing water so hot that it would scald the calloused foot of an elephant, but into this almost boiling liquid the natives go—one after another—for a final soak. Here the guests gather and have a jolly time, joking and laughing with one another as innocently as a group of fully clad children at play.

On many occasions, when a guest of a Japanese hotel, I have been a participant at these daily gatherings, but I must confess that at times the experience has been somewhat disconcerting. I never had hysterics, however, as was the case with the wife of a prominent American resident of Tokyo. She was taking a bath when several male guests, arrayed like Adam, innocently entered the room. She immediately became hysterical, screamed for help, and finally fell in a swoon. Her cries put the dismayed intruders instantaneously to flight and attracted her husband, who came to her rescue at once. He later complained to the proprietor of the hotel that he was not complying with the law which stipulated that there should be a partition in all bathrooms, dividing the women from the men. The proprietor insisted that there was such a partition, and the American was equally insistent that there was not. Finally, they both went to investigate. The hotel-keeper pointed out a two-inch board nailed to the floor and extending across the middle of the bathroom from wall to wall. He had complied with the letter of the law.

Meals in a Japanese hotel are fortunately less embarrassing functions than baths. They are eaten in the bedroom and are served on lacquer trays or short-legged tables by a kneeling *nesan*. The menu includes rice as the foundation plus an assortment of soup, fish (usually cooked, but sometimes raw), eggs in different guises, vegetables, and sometimes meat. Chopsticks are, of course, the sole means by which the food is conveyed to the mouth, and they are simple things to manipulate after a few minutes' practice.

Breakfast is, perhaps, the most unsatisfying meal in the Japanese bill of fare. I must confess that soup, rice, and a piece of raw fish are poor substitutes for a cup of coffee and a plate of ham and eggs. But how the pampered tourist would growl at the absence of grapefruit!





CHAPTER VIII

ON FOOT IN JAPAN

HCCORDING to Rousseau, the country people make the nation. At any rate, the provincial districts and rural life are the most attractive and interesting features of Japan. In the small towns and villages one finds the natives with their natural customs and manners unimpaired by Western contact; here one meets them in their unmolested haunts and sees them in their engaging simplicity and in all their innocent nudity.

The nerves of a blushing American damsel would be hopelessly shattered by the sights that would greet her on a tramping trip in rural Japan. They are a sufficient strain on those of a person more sophisticated. One sometimes thinks that the entire population of both sexes is destitute of part or all of their clothing, for in every direction one sees men stripped of all their garments and women and children in varying degrees of disarray. Laws in regard to scanty attire are happily nonexistent, or at least very lenient, for otherwise half the inhabitants would be in jail most of the time for their violation.

Such promiscuous disrobing would hardly be becoming in an American community, but I have no patience with tourists from the United States who insist upon clothing every Japanese who sheds his raiment. The governmental regulation—so generally circumvented—stipulating that partitions must be placed between men and women bathers in public bathhouses, has been adopted as the result of pressure from Americans. The semi-nude women who coaled the ships at Nagasaki have lately been compelled to wear waists because the tender sensibilities of tourists from the United States were shocked. And now some of my meddlesome compatriots are starting an agi-

tation to drape the naked industrial workers of Japan. Imagine our resentment if Oriental travellers to America demanded that our women lengthen their skirts and sew up their décolleté blouses!

Nor have I any patience with the Westerner who, after seeing some nudity in Japan, condemns the Japanese people as an immoral nation. Such an accusation is often made by those of exaggerated purity and shallow information and is particularly stupid coming from Westerners in whose countries divorces are almost as common as marriages and where virtue will not stand too much investigation. It is a silly notion that many clothes and good morals travel hand in hand, and that no clothes and immorality are twin brothers. Both sexes in some parts of Finland and Sweden bathe at seaside resorts clad only in the costume provided by Dame Nature, and I have never heard that the Finns and the Swedes were such terrible people. The Igorots of Luzon in the Philippines were models of constancy until the American authorities and missionaries began to array them in ready-made suits and celluloid collars.

I was determined to get another glimpse of Japanese country life. My wife having been installed in the house of some friends in Kyoto, I started out on foot to explore the provincial districts. My first destination was the town of Otsu at a distance of eight miles. Attired in a comfortable sack suit, a soft shirt, and heavy walking boots, I set out on my journey unencumbered by luggage except for a small bundle containing a toothbrush, shaving kit, and a few changes of clothing. I left my hotel at an early hour and found my way through the awakening streets of the

city. The populace was beginning to stir, merchants were opening their shops, and laborers were starting at their jobs.

I paused in the middle of the bridge spanning the river which divides Kyoto. Twenty or thirty men and women were already at work building a dam in the bed of the stream, and a crowd of the idle and the curious had congregated to watch them. The male toilers were clad in nothing but intent expressions, and the women were bare to their waists, but they worked away as indifferently as if they were smothered in bundles of clothes. I crossed the bridge. On the other bank, a dozen women laborers were feeding their babes who had been parked on the dry land.

I continued on my way, and in a few minutes I was out of the city, hitting a fair clip along the country road. Peasants were trudging slowly along with burdens of produce for the market. Women bucked their infants upon their backs. Men struggled over the uneven highway, balancing heavy loads on two-wheeled carts. An occasional ricksha bumped along with its kimono-attired passenger.

The route soon led into Otsu, a small town of several thousand people situated on the shore of Lake Biwa at the foot of a gently-rising hill. The community was astir, the narrow streets were crowded, and the shopkeepers appeared to be doing an unusually active business. The place was decked in holiday attire. Flags and queer streamers were floating from the housetops, gaily dressed revelers laughingly romped through the streets, and hawkers were selling odd wares from small stands along the way. It was apparent that some uncommon celebration

was taking place, and I learned later that it was the festival of the local Buddhist patron saint. I pushed my way slowly through the jostling crowds. With each step, my interest and amazement increased. As strange as all this was to me, I was stranger still to these curious townspeople. They stopped and inspected me in silent wonder.

What extraordinary sights greeted my eyes at every turn! Standing upon improvised pedestals were several medicine men. They were explaining, with the assistance of long poles and huge dramatically illustrated charts, the intricacies of the human anatomy. The frankness of their dissertations and the detailed nature of their drawings would not be tolerated even in the confines of a physiological museum in America.

I was lost in astonishment at the scene before me, but I suddenly found myself when I was forced by the crowd to make way for a score of naked men and women who, with their clothes under their arms, were eddying out of a small building a few paces from where I stood. As the door through which they came swung open, I could see nearly a hundred nude persons of all sizes either bathing in wooden tubs or drying themselves as they stood on adjacent platforms. People in the street were clamoring for admittance. The place was a public bath-house, and it was doing such an active business that its patrons were forced into the street as soon as they had finished their ablutions. There, in the midst of the crowd and before my innocent eyes, they calmly dressed themselves.

When the sun was setting and the day nearly spent, my mind naturally turned to thoughts of accommodations for the night. I understood less than a mouthful of Japanese

and couldn't read a single character, so I had to rely almost entirely upon my intuition to discover a hotel and upon gesticulations to make arrangements for a room.

All Japanese inns have a similar exterior appearance and can be recognized by the familiar array of sandals and shoes assembled at the entrance, which is generally a small matted vestibule sometimes containing a screen to shield the gaping space behind. Soon I stumbled over a collection of footwear, and in an instant I was seated on the tiny platform in front of the hotel, unlacing my American boots.

A little maid pattered out, made a graceful bow, and began fluttering about me like a beautiful butterfly. The proprietor immediately followed her, and I plunged into the middle of the sign language in an effort to convince him that I desired a room and meals. He grinned and genuflected and spluttered something unintelligible to me. I was about as useful as a dumb man on a blind debating team. The Japanese apparently had no conception of what I wanted. His grin developed into a laugh, and he evidently thought I was trying to play a joke on him. It took me an hour to convince him that I was serious.

He finally conducted me to my room, a small compartment on the ground floor. I had just finished surveying my new abode and had squatted tailor-fashion upon a straw mat when in came a smiling little *nesan*. She came right up to me, knelt down and, with a twinkle in her eyes, asked me for a cigarette. As she puffed away, she listened to every noise emanating from the hallway, fearing the approach of the proprietor. Soon he entered with a registration blank for my signature. The maid stuffed

her cigarette in the charcoal brazier and vanished with the speed of a rabbit. However, she returned in a few minutes and again knelt before me.

“I like you,” she said in broken English. I was nearly overcome.

“Why do you like me? I am an American,” I inquired, still laboring under considerable surprise.

“I like marry you,” she added with an Oriental smile.

This lightning proposal startled me, and I immediately began to devise means to shoo her out of the room. I pulled my pipe out of my pocket, filled it with cheap tobacco, and began to smoke most furiously.

“Beat a hasty retreat!” I finally thundered with all my might in the words of Mr. Shakespeare. When I looked around, the maid had completely evaporated.

A knock, and the sliding doors of my room opened to admit another maid who brought my evening meal. Fortunately, she was of a soberer temperament and, no doubt having heard of my ferocious shout, regarded me most solemnly and with apparent suspicion. She set a tiny lacquer table before me and, with the aid of a paddle, filled a porcelain bowl with rice from a wooden pail. I sipped a watery soup, ate a piece of fish, nibbled at a spinach-looking vegetable, and devoured a copious quantity of rice while the little Japanese woman sat as quietly and as motionless as Buddha. After the meal she made up my bed in the middle of the floor from quilts she had taken from cupboards in the walls of the room.

I was awakened early the following morning by the shifting of doors and windows in every part of the hotel, and I was soon out in the street, ready to continue my

trip. I had planned to take an excursion on Lake Biwa, and I wanted to find the dock from which the boats started. I asked a policeman for the information. He was as full of ideas as a barber college. I wandered on aimlessly.

Finally I reached the water front and accidentally stumbled upon the pier I wanted. I bought a ticket and, following a procession of country folk, crossed a narrow gangway to the deck of the steamer. It was a diminutive craft, hardly fifty feet long and as scanty in its appointments as the inside of an empty piano box. I perched myself on a rectangular ventilator while the other passengers huddled on the deck like bands of gypsies.

Lake Biwa is a beautiful body of water. It is about fifty miles in length and perhaps twenty in width and is situated between the rolling ranges of two series of foot-hills. The water was clear and calm, and the sun shone down from a cloudless sky. The little steamer stopped about every thirty minutes at one of the picturesque villages or quaint towns which studded the rim of the lake, and I saw the inhabitants lining the piers, the hustle and bustle of disembarking and embarking passengers, and the rustling of freight in one direction or another.

At Imazu, I abandoned my tour of the lake and left the boat. I had been studying a map and decided to cross the country on foot to Obama on the Sea of Japan. After the usual period of gesticulation, I was installed in a hotel for the night. The bath in this inn was the most conspicuous thing in the building, for it was situated squarely between the office and the kitchen, filled with guests and servants respectively. To destroy any remaining privacy

that might be lingering in the vicinity, the walls were made entirely of clear and transparent glass. For one at all inclined to modesty, a daily tub in this hotel was a most harrowing experience.

Attired in a kimono, I made my way from my room past the kitchen to this super-exposed bath. Half a dozen native men and women were phlegmatically and unblushingly cleansing themselves as they chatted with one another. Nonchalantly, I shed my kimono and began my ablutions. The other bathers soon finished and departed. I was left alone. Irvin Cobb's gold fish had the acme of privacy in comparison with me in this crystal showcase. The eyes of guests and domestics were turned upon me. I wanted to escape but, remembering Emerson's admonition that a gentleman is one who is at ease under all circumstances, I stood my ground and stuck to my task. A maid came in to pick up the soiled towels left by the other bathers. She gathered them up in a bundle and departed. Along with them she took my kimono! I was stranded. Finally, clad only in a bath towel, I made a bolt for the door and dashed, like Adam pursued, down the hall to my room.

In the morning when I left the hotel, the proprietor and his wife bade me a cordial farewell, and a dozen maids and menservants formed a double line and bowed me on my way. This demonstration was a manifestation of the hotel-keeper's hospitality and an example of the gauntlet of domestics a foreign guest must run before he is free to feel that he has no more tips to deal out.

My road took me along the shore of the lake, and I spent the greater part of the day pushing on on foot. This

trip certainly was a nude route. During the afternoon, I passed through a bathing resort where men, women, and children—clad in nothing but joyous smiles of the Orient—were plunging, dipping, and swimming in the lake. In every village respectable citizens were bathing in wooden tubs outside of their houses. This tour was only fit for a blind man.

Darkness overtook me at a lone house close by the roadside. I entered the yard and received a cordial greeting from the owner and his wife. They were simple, trusting souls, and I had little difficulty making them understand that I wanted accommodations for the night. I went in and partook of the primitive meal which they were about to eat as I came along. Soup, fish, and the usual wholesale quantity of rice comprised the repast.

The house was a tiny thatched-roofed edifice situated within a stone's throw of the lake. It contained a general jumble of crude furniture and miscellaneous fixtures and in this respect was in striking contrast to the simple and barren apartments of the hotels. The man was apparently a fisherman, eking out a meager existence. His wife was cook, general houseworker, gardener, and farm hand. The only other member of the family was a baby boy less than a year of age.

The house was lighted by only one faintly-burning oil lamp. I could not converse with my hosts in anything louder than the sign language. Because of the depressing prospect of sitting about in gloomy near-darkness, I made a suggestion that I be allowed to retire. Half of the floor of the room was the ground and the other half consisted of a matted platform with an elevation of several feet. It

was in one corner of this platform that I rolled over and settled myself for the night. The Japanese family occupied the other. There being no disturbing agencies of any kind about, I was able to sleep, unmolested and soundly, until morning.

My route the next morning led me away from the lake. It wound its way over hills and through thickly-wooded valleys. Toylike villages were nestled among the trees, terraced rice paddies covered the sloping countryside, and checkered gardens were crowded together in the lowlands. At frequent intervals on the main roadway were little settlements of houses with thatched roofs which radiated around the Buddhist temple and the two or three modest shops displaying scanty stocks of general supplies and miscellaneous trinkets. I was a source of great curiosity to the simple inhabitants of these villages and, as I passed through, many persons rushed from their houses to see me, the more timid ones remaining indoors and peering at me from a safe distance. They were particularly impressed by my height and seemed to comment to one another about my stature. My heavy leather boots were of special interest to them, and I noticed that they often turned away to conceal their laughter after they had thoroughly inspected them. It was difficult for them to restrain their smiles when they saw my briar pipe, and I inferred they thought my soft felt hat headgear fit only for a clown.

At midday I went into a shop in one of these villages and made sufficient purchases to make a meager meal. A crowd of curious natives followed me in and had much good-natured fun at my expense as I bought various odds

and ends for my lunch. Fruit, biscuits, and yellow sponge cake, similar to the Western creation and sold everywhere in Japan, were the assortment I was able to acquire.

Late in the afternoon I passed men and women returning from the fields. Others had already reached their homes and were performing their evening chores or were taking their daily baths. Here was a woman floating in a tub, there was another washing her five-year-old boy (if Japanese mothers would only scrub the faces of their youngsters more frequently, how vastly the landscape would be improved), and coming down the road was a man arrayed in nothing at all carrying a baby equally destitute of clothing. These seem odd sights when related in cold type, but they did not appear so unusual in their indigenous setting.

I had reached Obama, a seaside town of several thousand inhabitants, charmingly situated in a cove which opened out into a bay—an inlet from the Sea of Japan. I trudged through its narrow streets in search of a hotel. I was tired after my long tramp, but the gay aspect of the town, its moving crowds and illuminated shops, revived my spirits. I walked through the theater section with its bright lights, fantastic posters, and brilliantly-colored flags and pennants and turned into a lane leading to the waterfront. A band of ruffians nearly swept me off my feet as they rushed by in pursuit of some fleeing culprit who had apparently offended their sense of right by some overt act. Passers-by nudged one another as I edged my way through the hordes of scuffling citizens. Others stared at me as if I were a human giraffe or a being unknown to this earth. Still others smiled or broke into laughter, but

in none of these manifestations was I able to discern any sign of jeering or ridicule.

I found an inn on the water's edge and was assigned to a room on the second floor. This room overlooked a small court which separated my part of the house from the other wing and around which the bedrooms were located. The night was unseasonably warm. When I went to my window for air, I made the discovery that some of the guests had relieved themselves of many of their garments in order to meet the climatic vicissitude. It was impossible for me to look in any direction without encountering several scantily-attired females. In the room directly across the court from mine, two women were sitting before the open window, sewing and mending. They were garmentless, from their waists up. In the apartment below theirs were half a dozen maids, clad even more scantily, fanning themselves in an effort to keep cool. On the way to my bath that evening, I nearly stumbled over this bevy of beauties. It was almost impossible to avoid them. Although I had seen much of such informality in Japan and had had an extra dose of it on this trip, it was hard for my Anglo-Saxon soul to view it with complete complacency.

The son of the proprietor of the hotel spoke English and, on hearing that there was an American in the house, came to my room to call. He was most polite, as all country Japanese are, and was very cordial in the welcome he extended me. He asked me to go with him to a restaurant for dinner. When I attempted to decline on the grounds that it was late and that I was dressed only in a kimono, he insisted that I go just as I was. At first this attire impressed me as most conspicuous for public appear-



ance but, on second thought, I realized that in a Japanese community I would be less startling in this costume than in my customary clothes. Accordingly, I accepted the invitation and fared forth clad in my cotton kimono and a pair of sandals.

There was little to distinguish the restaurant either externally or internally from a hotel. We removed our footwear as usual, a simple operation with sandals, and were conducted into a private dining room with the customary matting-covered floor. My Japanese friend and I squatted down in one corner, and he suggested that we have *sukiyaki*.

As soon as he had given the order, two maids came in with a brazier by means of which we were to cook our own meal. They left the room and returned with a large shallow saucepan and with all the ingredients to be stewed therein, consisting of thinly-cut beef, sliced onions, leeks, green vegetables, bean curd, and several seasoning fluids. My friend placed the pan on the brazier. As soon as it had heated, he filled it with the foregoing provisions. In a few minutes the mixture was steaming and bubbling. After it had sufficiently cooked, he added several eggs before removing it from the little stove to serve. When finished, it was an excellent stew. I have eaten this concoction in the restaurants of Tokyo and Kyoto, where it was prepared over an electric stove; but the dish I had this evening, made in its original manner with primitive appliances, was the most delicious of them all.

A bevy of geisha were summoned and entertained us with their pretty dances and graceful interpretations. This is a common form of amusement for tourists in the cities

where it is perhaps performed by a more experienced and better-trained lot of girls, but the natural and unaffected manner of these country lassies made their exhibition vastly different from some of those I had seen in the large centers of population. I was a great curiosity to them. They were particularly impressed by my fair hair and were much amused when I spoke English with my host. They giggled every time I moved. If I had come dressed in my American clothes, I believe they would have died in convulsions of mirth.

My host and I returned to the hotel. After much bowing, our "good-nights" were said and I mounted the stairway to my room. The lightly-clad and beautiful little maids were still beneath my window. The scene was too much for me, so I immediately retired for the night.

In the morning they were still there. I concluded that Obama was not a safe place for me. I went directly by train to Kyoto for a rest cure which I badly needed.





CHAPTER IX

A CHINESE DINNER

BEFORE the World War, China was the white man's Paradise. John Chinaman was ever ready to jump in response to the foreigner's bidding; he had an exalted idea of the Westerner's ability for accomplishment, and he was willing to grant the stranger from the other side of the earth almost any privilege he demanded. As a spectator of the European catastrophe, China indulged in serious reflection and, like Japan, began to question the soundness of Occidental ways, with which she had in fact only half-heartedly flirted in the past. As a result, there has set in a reversion to things Chinese with which is coupled an obvious contempt for foreigners and their ideas.

When the Westerner talks of intervention, the Chinese only laughs and says, "You should try to run your own affairs before you endeavor to tell us what to do." The monetary values of all European countries have tumbled to depths where they are not worth the paper upon which they are printed, but the Chinese points with pride to his tael as real money. To him the political chaos and inter-provincial wars are no worse than the confusion and quarrels of Europe. In consequence, he has lost this regard for the foreigner and his ways and considers threats of intervention as nothing short of impudence.

Perhaps it is just as well that the day of the white man's Paradise is passing; for, after all, China belongs to the Chinese, and they alone must work out her stability and destiny. Some persons interpret the changed attitude as a smoldering and growing feeling against the resident foreigner. To expect anything else from a people whose

country is slowly being encroached upon by outsiders is demanding a trait seldom displayed by human beings.

As a matter of fact, China has never eagerly or seriously embraced Occidental methods, in spite of the examples under her very eyes afforded by the foreign-conducted treaty ports. Notwithstanding instances to the contrary, China is largely the same today as she has been for centuries. Political intrigue and disorder, internecine wars, antiquated modes of transportation, lack of education and medicinal treatment, child labor, barbarous customs and false standards of personal integrity exist now—even in the large port cities where foreign methods are close at hand—as they have for ages. Throughout the entire country and even in cosmopolitan Shanghai, one sees squeaking, human-propelled, wheelbarrows carrying passengers and freight. Many little girls with bound feet hobble along the streets of the treaty ports, and those who have not been maimed are exceptions in the interior. Opium is still widely smoked and native doctors, administering crude medicines and perpetrating superstitious cures, abound on every hand. Education, on the whole, is as backward as it was in the days before the foreigner brought his enlightenment from beyond the sea. The mission schools can hardly be cited as examples for, besides being alien institutions, they turn out neither a rounded Chinese nor a good Westerner, but a hybrid who very often proves to be a misfit in his community. The absence of queues seems to be the most substantial step in the direction of Occidental civilization!

Almost immediately after our arrival in Shanghai, my wife and I started on a three-and-a-half-days' trip up the

Yangtze River with Hankow as our destination. In Shanghai we had been vaccinated for smallpox and had received our first inoculations for typhoid fever; the remaining two injections, as a safeguard against the latter disease, were to be administered in Hankow. These ordeals made us feel miserable enough, but en route my wife acquired an acute sore throat and one of her eyes became dangerously infected. With this combination of discomforts, she was very ill when we disembarked.

That evening I was to be the guest of a prominent Chinese at dinner. As the affair had been arranged especially in my honor, I could not withdraw at the last minute without appearing most ungracious; so I decided to go, informing my wife that I would return at ten o'clock.

I did not return until three in the morning! Picture the state of anxiety my prolonged absence caused my wife. Here she was, six hundred miles in the interior of China (she had never before set foot outside the boundaries of the United States), confined to her bed with an assortment of ailments, her only friend a strange man, for we hadn't been married a very long time, and he had not appeared at an uncertain hour of the morning. She heard the ricksha coolies fighting savagely below her window and imagined that I had been murdered and thrown in the Yangtze, or, perhaps, that it was my habit to roll in with the break of day!

The dinner began at seven o'clock and proved to be a most sumptuous affair. It took place in a restaurant in the native city amidst all the tinsel and trappings that Orientals love so much. As I ascended the stairs leading to

our private dining room, I had to elbow my way through a crowd of curious coolies who had gathered at the entrance; a bedlam, supposed to be music, filled the air; servants were running to and fro with all sorts of strange dishes, and the kitchen—through which we had to pass—was expelling divers odors which defied the most indifferent nostrils.

The culinary end of a Chinese restaurant or of a private home would make the immaculate American housewife writhe with disgust. As a den of strange odors, polluted atmosphere, unscoured utensils, dreggy floors, unsanitary food, unwashed cooks, and general absence of hygienic precautions, the average Celestial kitchen would put a respectable *abattoir* to shame. It is sometimes situated in the front part of a restaurant, and the patrons must force their way through clouds of steam, between chopping blocks covered with odd-looking meat and vegetables, and past caldrons of sizzling fats and gristle. There is seldom a partition between the kitchen and the dining room in a restaurant, and the eaters are often seated within the fumes and fragrance of stewing food. The cooks are usually naked to the waist, especially in summer, and deplorable-looking coolies and assistants are generally as numerous as the flies.

Twenty guests were assembled at the Hankow dinner. All of them were Chinese except a European and myself. Our host was the director of the Changsha Provincial Mint and was known in the community as the Copper King. Neither he nor any of his native guests spoke a word of English, pure or pidgin, so communication between them and me had to be conveyed through my Euro-



pean companion who was fluently conversant with the Hankow dialect.

We sat at small tables sipping tea, as a substitute for an appetizer, and munching dried watermelon seeds, while several sleight-of-hand artists entertained us. These prestidigitators were a grotesque outfit arrayed in their long Oriental robes, fantastic head-dresses and false flowing beards that reached to their knees. They were the most finished exponents of the art of legerdemain I have ever seen and astonished us with tricks which seemed nothing short of miracles. They were a noisy lot as they applied themselves to their numerous feats, shouting and talking incessantly in their own tongue, but occasionally injecting for my benefit such familiar words as "Yes," "Yankee," "You bet," and "All right."

From a small basket scarcely large enough to contain a derby hat, they extracted sufficient poultry to stock a barnyard. Before they had finished emptying the contents of that apparently bottomless receptacle, pigeons were perched on every piece of furniture and were flying about the room. The magicians bundled one of their number in bed sheets, tied him so securely that he looked like an Egyptian mummy, and threw him into a trunk from which he extricated himself in less than the wink of an eye. They crushed in the palms of their hands what appeared to be perfectly good hens' eggs, only to pass them instantly to the guests as whole and sound as when they were laid.

At last we sat down at the table, and a waiter appeared with a whole roasted pig on a tray for our inspection. He returned to the kitchen, from whence the animal was

served to us in detail. We ate every bit of that pig, beginning with his ears and hide and winding up with his nose and feet.

The popular notion that Chinese eat rats, chickens' lips and bats' hips is hardly the truth. They do consume many odd dishes (I have heard of wildcat stuffed with chrysanthemum leaves) which seem strange to a foreigner, but as a nation they have developed the culinary art to a very high degree. They cook fish deliciously, prepare chicken so tender that it can be carved with a pair of chopsticks, and have concocted sauces and seasonings to a point approaching perfection. In my experience, I have never come across chop suey in China, considered by Americans to be a typical Chinese dish; and, as far as I know, such a gastronomic composition doesn't exist in the country. I think that it is purely an invention of Oriental restaurants in the United States to catch the trade of unsuspecting Americans.

This Hankow feast consisted of thirty-two courses which included cold meats and vegetables, stewed cabbage, bamboo shoots, fish, shrimps, chocolate-colored eggs, chicken, ducks' feet, pork in a dozen different guises, shark fins, seaweed, various kinds of fungi, birds'-nest soup and, finally, a bowl of rice to fill any vacant places still existing. This is the menu of an elaborate dinner. Many foreigners are very fond of what is known as "family chow," consisting of four or five simple dishes with a foundation of rice which the Chinese know how to cook so excellently.

Throughout a meal a hot white wine, called *samshu*, is served in small porcelain or metal bowls. Associated with

this tantalizing dose is a custom known as *gambai* by which the diner is assured of getting enough, and sometimes too much, to drink. *Gambai* simply consists of toasting one another, swallowing the contents of the little bowl in one gulp and giving evidence thereof by displaying the empty cup to all those at the table. In short, *gambai* is "Bottoms up." Each person must respond to such toasts scores of times during an evening. If he is the guest of honor, he will have no reason to complain about the aridity of the occasion.

The most disconcerting feature of a Chinese meal to a foreigner is the almost complete disregard of anything approaching cleanliness. The tablecloth soon has the appearance of a large wheel, the spokes of which are represented by stripes of soup and particles of food which drip from the porcelain spoons or chopsticks as they convey the pabulum from the common receptacles in the center of the table. If the host or one's neighbor helps one to an especially choice morsel with his own chopsticks, it is supposed to be an unusual gesture of consideration! After a meal is finished, a Chinese table has the appearance of a refuse heap, for discarded particles of food litter its entire surface and the general result is an uninviting scene of débris. Nor is the refuse confined to the table, for many an eater uses the floor as a garbage pail. All this is distressing to a foreigner, but his last sense of decency is shattered when his neighbor calmly treats the carpet as a cuspidor. It sometimes takes a man with ironclad insides to stick it throughout an entire dinner, but I found little difficulty in doing so. I never could, however, accustom myself to regarding the table as a

trough, although I often threw unedible food on the floor, kicking it aside to my neighbor's chair.

Table manners, as understood by the West, do not exist among the Chinese. The Japanese have a code of table etiquette and are most particular in their method of manipulating chopsticks and other table implements. They are horrified if a diner conveys rice to his mouth in any but a dainty fashion. In China, on the contrary, there seems to be a woeful absence of any dietary canons. An eater is at liberty to use any means he can contrive in order to get his food. Reaching to any point of the table, gulping and smacking, spluttering fragments, and eating with one's fists or elbows are all permissible, even in the highest social circles.

The only intimation of an effort toward cleanliness seems to be the use of steaming towels which are served to the guests several times during a meal. These uninviting fabrics are passed by the waiters, and it is a grotesque sight when a dozen or more diners suddenly cease eating and begin vigorously swabbing their brows and hands. Sometimes one towel is sent the rounds and does service for a whole table, but I doubt if even those used individually are laundered before they appear again.

Democracy is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Chinese, and a dinner is an occasion where this trait is most manifest. The guests are very friendly with one another and also with the waiters, generally ignorant coolies and often most wretchedly and shabbily dressed. Privacy is rare. Idlers and passers-by congregate at the entrance or sometimes in the dining room and curiously watch the whole performance. I attended a dinner in the

native city of Shanghai given by a wealthy dye merchant, and fifty or more coolies and loafers from the streets crowded the courtyard of his private house and almost completely blockaded the entrance to the dining salon. No effort was made to put them out in spite of the fact that their presence obstructed the path of the waiters and very seriously interfered with the serving of the meal.

An important part of an orthodox Chinese dinner is the introduction of a score of sing-song girls and accompanying musicians who play on quaint and curious instruments. The usual flock of these girls was present at our Hankow dinner. They came in toward the end of the repast and each took a seat directly behind one of the guests. They were so grotesque they hardly seemed human. Their hair was greased and plastered tightly to their heads and their faces were heavily rouged. They wore close-fitting jackets and snugly-cut trousers and were smothered in flamboyant jewelry. Their duties consisted of regaling the guests with conversation and song. I once saw several of these young girls in Tientsin, not one of them a day over twelve years of age. They are generally so pitifully ignorant that they can say nothing to interest a full-grown man, and their vocal efforts are like a surgeon's lance to the ear drum. A young damsel screeching in a shrill voice within two inches of one's Eustachian tube is not entertainment in any sense of the word.

Nor can the instrumental music be classed as entertainment. Even in a Broadway restaurant, the players would be ejected as infernal nuisances. However, one can not fail to admire the dexterity required to produce any kind of a sound from these primitive instruments. I once tried

to coax noise out of the one-stringed violin with a snake-skin body but succeeded in generating nothing but absolute silence.

At the conclusion of the Hankow dinner, a score of native acrobats solemnly filed in and amused us for an hour. It was then eleven o'clock, and my thoughts turned to my wife suffering from her complication of ailments in a strange hotel. I made a move to go. My European friend, however, said that my departure would be entirely out of order, for the Copper King's son was planning another dinner to take place immediately in my honor. There seemed no avenue of escape, so I tried to accept with good grace, and off we went to a second restaurant in a different part of the native city.

Within half an hour we were seated at a table confronted with a new display of food. This repast was a foreign meal. I could eat nothing more, but my Chinese friends devoured the contents of every dish as if they hadn't seen food for a week. "Three Star" brandy was served in tumblers, in accordance with what they thought was the Western custom, and the Orientals drank it as if it were tea, without any apparent ill effects. One glassful, which I didn't take, would have paralyzed me for a month.





CHAPTER X

MINGLING WITH THE CHINESE

W E made several visits to Peking. On one of these trips we were guests of my old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Yung Sam Sung, whom I had known during my sojourn in China in 1911 and with whom I had lived for a number of months when Mr. Yung was president of the Tangshan Engineering College.

Their Peking house, in which we were cordially welcomed and happily installed, was a typical one-story Chinese edifice built about a series of courts and situated behind the usual high wall which encloses the compound of residences in Northern China. On opening the main gates, one found a small vestibule with a dragon screen which serves in the homes of old-fashioned Chinese as a means of warding off the evil spirits which are unable to go around corners; but in Yung's house, it was only to insure privacy. From the vestibule one immediately stepped into a spacious court flanked on one side by the kitchen and servants' quarters, on the other by bedrooms and in the rear by the main axis of the house containing the living and dining rooms. Beyond were two wings of private apartments. The whole structure was built of slate blue brick and had a cornice in ornamental and highly-colored relief depicting historical scenes of China. The interior of the house had a pronounced Western tinge which added to the convenience in harboring a couple of Occidentals.

This residence was built only a few years ago and in many ways is more substantial and less ornate than many of the old homes of Peking. I have been in private compounds where the houses were very elaborately constructed of frail-looking walls penetrated by intricately

carved doors and paper windows, where one courtyard succeeded another in a maze of passageways, and where one caught one's death of cold going from the bedroom to breakfast.

A typical Peking house is charming in architecture, but it is an uncomfortable domicile for a Westerner. It is usually cold and barren; the straight-backed, cushionless chairs are hard; the floors are often carpetless, and the furniture rigid and sparse. Sometimes one discovers a quaint old table, a richly carved cabinet, a beautiful vase, or a striking picture; but more frequently one's sense of good taste is jarred by the presence of huge silver cupboards, grotesque tinsels, and a frightful combination of colors. In a country where even pink and lavender limousines are tolerated—they are popular with the wealthy Chinese in Shanghai—one is not surprised that there are many houses which display a lack of taste in interior appointments.

Yung was educated in America and his wife, who has never been out of China, belongs to the third generation of a family of native Christians who were forced to flee from Canton to Hongkong where they lived in exile for many years. They both knew English, Yung speaking it so well that one could not distinguish his diction and accent from those of a cultivated Englishman or American.

A number of years ago, he was standing in a Chinese railway station when an American approached him and inquired in pidgin English, "Charlie, you catchee the time?"

Yung looked squarely at him and disgustedly asked, "Do you speak English?"

"Yes, I do," was the American's reply.

"Why in hell don't you speak it, then?" Yung crushingly retorted.

Three fine boys and two attractive girls were the younger generation of Yung's family. Mazie, his two-year-old daughter, was a cunning little tot and was a picturesque mite of a figure in her padded winter robes. She was continually bubbling over with good humor and always saluted us by kowtowing, getting down on her hands and knees and bending over like a small beetle until her little head touched the floor. Yung's household seemed to grow during our stay, for new members appeared almost every day. We had only a glimpse of his mother, who always remained in seclusion in accordance with the old custom, as she dashed across one of the numerous courtyards. An *amah* from an interior village, employed as a nurse for the six-week-old baby boy, nearly dropped her precious charge when she got her initial view of my wife, the first foreign woman she had ever beheld.

We thrived on delicious Chinese *chow*. Breakfast, as in Japan, was the most unsatisfying meal of the day. It consisted of noodles and chopped meat or a rice soup. There was an inexcusable absence of grapefruit! Tiffin and dinner presented a more copious collection from which an Occidental could gather nourishment. Five or six dishes comprising fish, meatballs, cabbage, a species of omelet, the ubiquitous bamboo, with a liberal background of rice generally constituted the selection for these meals.

Every evening Yung's house was full of guests who came to play mah jongg or cards, the latter being more

popular with the Chinese than the former. Americans have so changed mah jongg since its introduction into the United States a few years ago that an orthodox Chinese would have difficulty in recognizing the game. "Pure hands" and numerous "flowers" plus the complicated system of scoring are unknown to Celestial players. Happily, there is no confusion or discussion among them about the rules, as seems to be the case in the United States. I heard of an argument between two American women in New York regarding some disputed point which was settled amicably when one of them stated that her method was in accordance with the rules of the Shanghai Club. Mah jongg is not played in the Shanghai Club, and I doubt if there is a set of the game on its premises!

In Tientsin I visited my old friend Mr. Tse Ping Sze, brother of the Chinese Minister to the United States. Mr. Tse is a prominent and wealthy man and received me most cordially in his home. His wife did not appear, nor was her name mentioned. In spite of feminine retirement and subjection, many Chinese men have told me that the women are the real rulers of the country and that thousands of husbands throughout the land live in continuous fear of their wives!

From Tientsin I made a trip in midsummer to Tangshan, an old tramping ground of mine and a town of possibly twenty thousand inhabitants, located about one hundred miles north of Peking. Mr. Tsao, a Tientsin merchant, was my companion. We were on our way to see the celebrations in connection with an annual Chinese festival. It was necessary for us to spend the night in Tangshan, and I left all the hotel and eating arrangements

to Tsao, explaining that I wanted him to do exactly as he would if I were a Chinese.

On arrival at the Tangshan station, we hopped into rickshas and started for the town, about a mile away. Across the tracks I could see the huge machine shops of the railways of North China. In the distance were the brick buildings of the government engineering school in which I had taught many years before. We left the modern institutions behind and made our way over the rutted road to the shabby mud houses of the native city. In a few minutes we were jostling through crowds of its unfortunate and poverty-stricken inhabitants. Our rickshas drew up at a most disreputable-looking building, and my heart sank to my knees when Tsao told me that it was our hotel. I didn't make a murmur and decided to see it through even if I had to sleep on a box of broken glass and eat my meals out of a dust pan.

I had seen Chinese hotels in Tientsin, Hankow, and Canton that, although uncomfortable and hardly the perfection of cleanliness, were reasonably habitable, but the present pigsty was the best Tangshan had to offer. The ground floor was a country restaurant with boiling-vats and stewing-pots in the front and wooden tables with hungry and disgusting eaters in the rear. It was mealtime when we arrived, and the place was full of tradesmen, coolies, and nondescripts. Travelling barbers, migrating gamblers, food hawkers, and petty salesmen were roving in and out among the tables announcing their trades and calling out their wares in such a hideous chorus that the uproar sounded like the shrieks of an infuriated calliope.

Tsao and I found a small table which we had exclu-

sively to ourselves, and he ordered a simple meal of chicken stew, boiled cabbage, meatballs, fried mushrooms, and rice. We had plenty of tea to drink but, as fond as I was of native food, I insisted upon something alcoholic to act as a disinfectant. Old-hand foreigners in China swallow a couple of shots of brandy, as a precautionary measure, before partaking of a Chinese meal. The brandy kills the germs, they say. On this occasion I was only able to obtain a bottle of Japanese beer.

Our bedrooms were upstairs. I found mine to be a barren wooden-walled cell with a huge box-like contraption for a bed and a couple of weather-beaten-looking chairs for the rest of the furniture. Such a thing as a pillow was not to be seen, but in its place was a sloping board upon which I was to lay my weary head. A coarse sort of sheet, none too clean, was the sole evidence of covering. It was fortunately a warm night and bed clothes were unnecessary. Primitive washing arrangements were at one end of the hall. To sleep in such a setting was discouraging. I simply stretched out on the wooden box without disrobing and in a few minutes was lost in peaceful slumber.

The following morning I breakfasted on rice, which is something of a luxury in North China. Its use as a staple food is largely confined to the wealthy and moderately well-to-do classes. The coolies and lower strata of society content themselves with millet. Wheat is an increasing form of nutriment, and one now sees large quantities of flat, underdone buns and simple cakes.

Tsao and I took rickshas and set out for the festival at the Buddhist Temple some distance from the town.

The dingy streets were unusually crowded that morning; gaudy banners were flying from the shops; hawkers were more numerous than ever, and a holiday spirit pervaded the air. Outside of the town the countryside looked like a huge fan, the ribs of which were caravans of Peking carts converging from all directions toward the temple. The Chinese country roads were hardly more than ancient wheel tracks across the fields. Two parallel ruts, sometimes a foot in depth with cobble stones between them, served as the route over which the springless vehicles, drawn by sturdy horses or hardy mules, made their way. A whole family, crowded on the bed of a two-wheeled wagon, must certainly know what real discomfort is after a trip over one of these roads.

Farmers with their wives and children were having their single outing of the year, and many of them had travelled for ten miles or more to reach the seat of the festivities. They came by the thousands, from every point of the compass. As far as the eye could reach, one could see the endless processions bobbing up from below the horizon. For a radius of miles around the temple, the countryside was soon covered with carts and squatting natives.

Within this circle were countless acres of canvas-covered booths at which were sold every conceivable variety of Chinese food and Oriental trinkets. Medicine men and makers, sleight-of-hand artists and jugglers, Punch and Judy show manipulators, fantastic outdoor actors, noisy vendors, professional beggars, and unfortunate mendicants, all were there. Thousands of country-folk—farmers, Manchu women with painted faces, Chinese women with bound feet, and gaily attired children with strange

headgear and odd coiffeurs—milled about. It was a turbulent sea of surging, pushing, and boiling humanity. Weird pennants and colorful banners flew from all the stands, reels of cheap bunting enveloped the booths, and an infinite number of flags added flash and gaiety to the scene. Temporary restaurants and tea shops had been installed, weak orangeade was on sale at every turn, firecrackers popped almost continuously, and Chinese music made the air thick with discordant sounds.

This was what the Chinese considered amusement. It was a hopeless bedlam and riot of dust, noise, color, and commotion, but it was intensely interesting—a scene that only an Oriental country could stage.

Tsao and I elbowed our way through the seething mass of humanity, stopped to see a prestidigitator extract a dozen rabbits from a small wooden box, watched a particularly forlorn beggar indulge in antics before a crowd, listened to the harangue of an unusually wild-faced hawker, strained our eyes at the amusing manipulations of the manikins, and examined the infinite display of tinsel and rubbish that was on sale. Finally we came to the temple, a modest building situated on a small hill and approached by a wide flight of perhaps a hundred steps. Thousands of simple people stood before the edifice in evident expectation of something. Tsao and I decided that we had found a point of vantage at which to stop. Two huge bronze urns of incense were smoking at each side of the temple's entrance. A forest of candles was burning on the red-lacquered, tinsel-decked altar. Wild notes of Chinese music were screeching and thundering like hell in eruption through the huge door.



Suddenly through the floor in front of the altar was thrust the head of a huge monster. It was a gigantic red dragon with large protruding eyes and a vicious-looking mouth. The head shook ferociously, and the angry eyes of the ugly creature seemed to spell vengeance on the mass of Chinese assembled below. The terrible beast began to come out of his hole, from the bowels of the earth. He rose slowly and crept to the edge of the steps where he hesitated for an instant to survey the people who stood in silent awe. He began to descend, swaying from one side to another like a giant snake. The crowd moved back. He was halfway down the steps, and his body was still emerging from the hole in the earth. He reached the lowest step before he was completely visible—a full one hundred feet in length. At the bottom he stopped and gave the crowd a baleful look. He finally growled, and flames of fire burst out of his mouth.

Suddenly he turned and began to twist his way back to his den beneath the temple. As Tsao and I were leaving with the dispersing multitude, I glanced back just in time to see one of the many feet of the monstrous dragon stumble on a step. The next instant a coolie came tumbling headlong down the steep incline!

Life for a foreigner in a Chinese treaty port is very much what he himself makes it. The universal presence of dirt and the consequent danger of smallpox, cholera, and other contagious diseases are naturally distasteful features to residents from the Western Hemisphere, many of whom deliberately shun the natives as much as possible in order to avoid any possibility of contamination. The

tourist, however, sometimes goes to extreme lengths to insure his own purity and to preclude any remote likelihood of corruption. I knew an American traveller who was so filled with the dread of acquiring an Oriental disease that he ventured only once beyond the confines of his Occidental hotel in Shanghai, and in this instance he and his family hurriedly surveyed the foreign concessions of the city from the interior of a hermetically-sealed limousine. To safeguard his immaculateness still further, he always travelled with a rubber bathing contraption in spite of the fact that porcelain tubs are found in abundance in many of the leading hostelries. His idea of China doesn't extend beyond the limits of the European settlements of Shanghai. He avoided the native city as if it were a pesthouse.

The filth in the Far East so disgusted another tourist of my acquaintance that on his arrival in Shanghai, he cancelled an extensive itinerary of the Orient. After a few days at the Astor House, he sailed away, bound for home among the "folks" in Nebraska. He arrived after an absence of ten weeks, during which period he had had four hours in Honolulu, an afternoon in Yokohama, a beef-steak dinner at a foreign hotel in Kobe, a day aboard ship in the harbor of Nagasaki, and a week's sojourn in the international sections of Shanghai.

For a resident foreigner, only limited contact with the Chinese is necessary and, if one is unfortunate enough to desire it, he can live almost as free from association with them as in the States, except for an occasional conversation with the domestics and shopkeepers. Aliens of my acquaintance have lived in Shanghai for twenty years

and have never been to Peking, one of the most marvelous cities in the world. Others have never eaten a native meal nor even so much as tasted Chinese *chow*. I know two Occidentals, born and brought up in Shanghai, who have returned to Europe to remain permanently, and the only knowledge they have of China has been acquired in the foreign concessions of that port. They never visited the native city, one boundary of which is only two blocks from the International Settlement!





CHAPTER XI

THE FASCINATION OF PEKING

PEKING is one of the most interesting and attractive capitals of the world. It is famous for its long and imposing vistas and, in this respect, excels all other cities with the possible exception of Paris and Washington. One ascends the seemingly endless steps of the Drum Tower to be rewarded by a wonderful panorama of colors, lines, and space which defies depiction by brush or pen.

To the left, within pink walls, is the Forbidden City—its yellow-tiled roofs glistening in the sun like sparkling jewels; in the distance the stately *Chien-Mien*, or East Gate, rises like a proud monument; and far beyond, in the northeast corner of the Chinese City, the great Temple of Heaven reposes in the golden haze of the Celestial morning. To the right, the white Dagoba thrusts its peculiarly Oriental dome through the tree-tops; Coal Hill rises to survey the grounds of the Winter Palace; and the Hall of Classics and the Lama Temple sit embedded in the heart of the Tartar City.

But perhaps the most impressive aspects of the picture are the miles of gray walls, above which rise the majestic gate towers. One can trace the line of these enclosures as they completely surround the Tartar and Chinese Cities. Visible as far as the eye can reach are the inspiring oriental piles, gently piercing the dusty mist of Northern China as they serve as sentinels at the entrances of the Republic's capital. Far from the city walls the Summer Palace and its spacious gardens lie hidden from view; and nestled against the horizon are the Western Hills, the valleys and peaks of which are dotted with ancient temples and tiny shrines.

From our vantage point on the top of the Drum Tower, we could easily imagine that this was a dream city without noise, dirt, or human stir. It was only a fleeting fancy, however, for when we descended we were lost in scenes of picturesque life and strenuous activity. Peking is the rendezvous of the North. Her streets and shops are hives of cosmopolitan animation. Here the Chinese politician and merchant rub shoulders with the stately and well-groomed Manchu; here are Mongols from the great northern plains who wind their way in camel caravans across the Gobi Desert; here the springless and uncomfortable wagons laden with country-folk amble along the wide dusty streets, and here Japanese statesmen and traders pour in on the daily express trains. A sprinkling of diplomats and travellers from Europe and America form part of the pageant. These people come at all seasons of the year indifferent to the terrific heat of summer, the bitter cold of winter, and the baffling dust storms of spring which smother and envelop one with the impurities of the centuries.

The broad streets and the narrow *hutungs* are colorful thoroughfares. Comfortable rickshas, Peking carts, shaggy and moth-eaten camels, heavily-laden mules, open and closed carriages with outriders on horseback, brilliant-hued palanquins, and American automobiles amble and flit to and fro on all the main arteries of the city. In fact, one sees every known means of transportation except roller skates and tramcars. However, this latter method of locomotion will soon be adopted, for a franchise for electric cars has been recently granted and the system is now in course of construction. Thus the advancing hand of mod-

ern invention slowly steals the charm of the quaint places of the earth.

An old-time foreigner in Shanghai once told me that there were only two cities in China worth visiting, and that when one had spent a few weeks in each, one had seen all the urban life the country had to offer. He pointed out that most Chinese cities are much alike and a trip to one in the North and one in the South was sufficient. Peking and Canton were the two he mentioned. He maintained that a wall, narrow streets, crowded shops, rickshas, sedan chairs, donkeys, similar odors, the same strange food and merchandise, musty temples, filth, and beggars were the outstanding characteristics of most Chinese cities. He contended that they were as much alike as are Detroit, Cleveland, Dayton, and Cincinnati. Shanghai, he stated, is a Euro-Asian community, its native section possessing nothing unusual; Hankow is a treaty port with a typical Chinese quarter similar to hundreds of others; Wuchang contains nothing particularly distinctive; Anking on the Yangtze is a classical example of a walled town; and Tientsin is an uninteresting metropolis, business being the only possible excuse for visiting it.

The truth or error of my informant's theory depends largely upon the temperament of the traveller, and I most decidedly dissent from his opinion. China has a host of fascinating cities, each with its own characteristics. The charm of Hangchow is its beautiful location, Foochow is famous as a great tea center, Kukiang produces matchless porcelain, Nanking is interesting as the old capital, Tsingtau is an example of a modern community, and

Soochow is a delightful place of many canals, quaint bridges, and picturesque gardens.

However, there can be no conflict of opinion among intelligent human beings in regard to the wonders and glories of Peking. I have met only one man who expressed complete disgust with the Chinese capital, but his anemic mentality was capable of enjoying or appreciating nothing more extensive than a food-laden table.

Peking possesses an unexcelled treasure in the Forbidden City, which was opened to the general public after the fall of the Manchus. There is nothing on this planet that surpasses it for beauty of coloring and design. Enclosed within its famous pink walls, it is situated in the center of the Imperial City and is approached from the *Chien-Mien* by a broad and imposing avenue of stately Oriental monuments. Visitors enter through the side gates to find a noble group of yellow-tiled palaces and halls mounted on great marble terraces, surrounding spacious courts and squares. A series of large edifices forms the axis while smaller buildings, laid out with perfect symmetry, flank it on both sides. The palace in which the emperors were crowned, halls for examinations and official receptions, and buildings which served as special quarters for the ruling families and their courts succeed one another in a dazzling and fascinating maze. Huge urns—the gold-leaf coating of which was scraped off by looting soldiers at the time of the Boxer Rebellion—stand on the terraces at the four corners of the buildings, and artistic bronze figures complete the setting.

Several of these palaces have been converted into museums containing such priceless treasures that the fair vis-

itor from the West is lost in a state of complete ecstasy when within their walls. Lacquer and blackwood screens that resemble lacework; quaint furniture; miniature pagodas of jade, gold, and cloisonné; and huge Chinese lanterns which appear to be products of dreamland surround one in amazing abundance. One hall is exclusively devoted to the display of jewels and ornaments. What a treat it would be for an American girl to be turned loose in this wonderland with full permission to help herself! Rich green jade that puts the pale bluish stuff sold on the *Rue de la Paix* to hopeless shame, pure-cut crystals that glisten and sparkle even in the dark, clear transparent amber necklaces which the Chinese call strings of fire, and pearls and corals that make one's mouth water are on display in every Oriental shape and design in lavish profusion. Another hall contains an exhibit of pictures. In the lofty Coronation Hall may be seen the throne prepared for Yuan Shi-kai, but which was never used.

There is always a fly in the ointment. The symmetry and beauty of the Forbidden City is brutally marred and almost ruined by the vulgar intrusion of a hideous three-story red-brick building of western distortion. It is as much out of place as a circus clown in a cathedral cloister. I was told that it was designed by a German architect at the request of the late Empress Dowager. This irreverent and perverted draughtsman and desecrator should have been compelled to eat all of his blue prints for perpetrating such an outrage.

On one of our visits to the Summer Palace, we were accompanied by the Princess der Ling who, when a young girl, had been a lady-in-waiting to the Empress Dowager

and had spent much time within its confines when it was a resort of the ruling family. We stood on the shore of the lake on which the palace is superbly situated and gazed at the mass of many buildings rising in successive tiers to the main tower at the summit of the hill. Climbing upward, we attained this vantage point and looked down upon hundreds of yellow-tiled roofs and dozens of Oriental gardens. Beyond, the blue water was dotted with an occasional picturesque island, and here and there a quaint, white camel-back bridge was visible. We then inspected the open-air theater where the old Empress daily witnessed one of her favorite plays. We cupped our hands about our eyes and peered through windows into her private apartments and into the halls for guests and attendants. Many of the furnishings and decorations had been removed. All these buildings are practically deserted and in disuse.

Although less than twenty years have elapsed since the Summer Palace was occupied, we found many of its buildings and arcades beginning to disintegrate and to show the result of neglect so characteristic of the Chinese. Within a few yards of the shore of the lake and extending the full length of the palace grounds is a splendid colonnade decorated with thousands of paintings depicting Chinese life. At the rate this structure is crumbling, a few years hence will see it in a state of complete decomposition unless some restorative measures are taken.

For hours we browsed about in leisurely enjoyment under the delightful guidance of the Princess, whose descriptions brought to life these slumbering ornate buildings and gardens which had been the Old Buddha's pride.



My sense of beauty was jarred, however, by the hideous marble boat, the concoction of some weird and twisted Chinese mind, which was used as a tea room and which looked more like a gigantic piano box than an adornment to the summer home of an Empress.

The Lama Temple in Peking affords a splendid example of the life of Tibetan Buddhist monks. These yellow-cowled creatures, who are so grawsome that they hardly appear human, reside in a large compound which contains their living quarters or cells and a dozen or more shrines and edifices. If the visitor arrives at the appointed hours, he will have the opportunity of hearing the mumbling chants of these priests and will see them arrayed in their unwashed robes and weird headgear. This compound would scarcely seem a safe place for a fair maid to explore alone, for these cloistered parasites glare with almost covetous curiosity at every woman who enters their stronghold. A number of the inmates are mere youngsters doomed to an ignorant life of slavery to the distant Living Buddha. The lamas apparently extend the doctrine of "Get them young" so as to include small boys whom they seize at tender ages as novitiates for an existence of monotony and inactivity.

It was a beautiful morning in late April, and Peking was filled with the peculiar brilliance of the North China sun striking through the ancient capital's aura of dust. How glorious will be the Temple of Heaven, I thought, as our rickshas jostled through the crowd at *Chien-Mien* and I contentedly expressed my anticipation to the Manchu lady who was our companion!

Soon the pink walls of the tremendous enclosure of the

Temple came into view, and then the guard was admitting our rickshas through the side door of the gate through which the Emperor passed for his bi-yearly devotions. Our friend led us over a picturesque bridge toward the place where the Son of Heaven fasted and meditated for five days before offering sacrifices. Our last visit to this lovely spot had been in winter and now, as we passed under the portal, I was staggered by the glory and fragrance of hundreds of lilacs in full bloom in the courtyard. We talked in subdued voices as we lingered in the buildings or walked about among the profusion of flowers. We then followed a path that wound under lordly trees until we came upon the Altar of Heaven, gleaming in the sun like an enormous white jewel, a sight to inspire profound admiration in Christian and pagan alike.

Our rickshas were waiting, and we traversed the long broad walk leading from the Altar to the Temple of Heaven. Mounted on a huge circular dais of white marble with its bluish-purple roof pointing to the sky, the temple is a sight to make even the most stolid heart skip a few beats. We halted quietly in the arch before the courtyard to feast our eyes, and our friend, who is a Christian, told us something of the ceremony of the Emperor's worship.

The solemn stillness was suddenly rent by a distant chant, and the sound was soon followed by its source. Scores of little Chinese Christians appeared. Following their charges were several foreign Salvation-Army lassies. They hurried past us without glancing at the magnificent sight before their eyes, and soon the children, like a swarm of blue flies, were struggling on short legs up the marble steps of the Temple, singing a native adaptation of a

gospel hymn. We waited in vain for them to come out, and at last we too ascended.

Inside this edifice, which had been the scene of the most sacred and impressive rites of their race, the little girls were noisily skipping rope and bouncing balls, and one of the English Salvationists was batting a tennis ball about indiscriminately. We shrank from the door and turned disgustedly away. Through one of the damaged windows of the Temple came a ball and, obeying an unchristianlike impulse, I gave it a very effective kick off the terrace into the tall grass. The sun had gone out of the morning; it had been irreparably ruined by these bearers of salvation.

Who could disagree with our Manchu friend when she said, "Ah, why do they teach Chinese children this lack of respect for tradition?" Does the burning of the torch of salvation in the East, I thought, require that the Temple of Heaven should be turned into a recreation ground for Western games?

Imagine the Anglo-Saxon indignation if a group of Chinese women were caught prompting little English girls to play mah jongg in Westminster Abbey!





CHAPTER XII

BUSINESS AND PLEASURE IN THE ORIENT

SOCIAL contact is of great importance in the business life of the Chinese. They are fond of entertainment and are most generous and hospitable to foreign merchants in giving dinners, arranging theater parties, and serving tea on all occasions. Weighty and urgent transactions which would be settled in America in a few hours often require several days, and even weeks, for consummation in China. They are generally preceded by feasts and amusement.

I had made a three-day trip to Canton to close some business with a prominent Chinese and was desirous of completing my task without delay in order to return as soon as possible to Shanghai, where urgent matters awaited me. I soon found that it was impossible to speed up the native merchant. On arrival at my office, he immediately invited me to a large restaurant for refreshment. I willingly accepted, for I thought we could discuss our affairs undisturbed in a private room. I was mistaken, however; for when we entered the restaurant, half a dozen Celestials joined us for an afternoon chat. I resigned myself to the situation and wasted several hours while they ate dried watermelon seeds, sipped tea, and drank their hot white wine. When the gathering broke up, I tried to pin the merchant down to commercialism. He wished to defer it until the evening and invited me to dinner at a large *chow* house. There we ate surrounded by scores of natives who created such a noise that one couldn't hear oneself eat, not to mention speak. Our discussion again had to be postponed!

My Chinese friend next announced that he had to go to his birthplace in the interior of the province to visit

his father and mother and to make arrangements for their future graves and suitable monuments. He agreed to meet me in Hongkong a week hence, on the day of his return from his parental visit, and cordially asked me to dine at his home in that city.

On the appointed evening, I was on hand at his Hongkong residence. His train was delayed, and he did not arrive in his drawing-room to receive his guests until ten o'clock. After a delicious meal, I departed without having uttered a word about business. Each time I had tried to introduce the pressing topic, my host dismissed it by every sort of diversion. I had booked my return passage to Shanghai and was to sail the next day at noon. Obviously, I had to get some action and, on leaving his house, I finally impressed the necessity firmly upon him. He met me the following morning prepared to discuss our proposition. In half an hour our transaction was settled!

In Hankow I had a similar experience. I endeavored to make an appointment with a well-known steel manufacturer, and he responded by inviting me to an amateur theatrical performance in which he was to take a leading part. The play began at seven o'clock and took place in a building in the compound of his mill. I arrived at the theater on time and seated myself in one of the most uncomfortable chairs in the Orient. I was securely wedged in the middle of a row of fat and perspiring native men and women whose proximity, as well as that of the audience fore and aft, precluded even the slightest extension of my limbs. My friend was scheduled to appear on the stage at midnight, and I sat for endless æons, tortured by cramps in my legs and harassed by the fidgets.

The performance was a typical Chinese production. The actors wore brilliant robes, fantastic head-dresses, and long artificial beards extending to their knees. They screeched, yelled, and produced a continuous stream of weird sounds that would put an acre of disabled gramophones to shame. The musicians, a half-clad group, sat in the middle of the stage, twisting out the most uncanny noises to add to the general discordance. Attendants assisted the actors, adjusted their robes, gave them cups of tea, and caught them before they struck the floor when they were slain in some tragic scene. Wet hot towels flying over the heads of the audience were hurled by men in the front of the theater to boys in the aisles. They were then passed to the spectators to wipe off the steaming perspiration. I tried to forget my discomfort and watch the actors through this tumult of towels.

I was evidently not the only restless person in the audience. When the play was well along in its noisy course, the women—tired of holding their babies on their knees—disposed of them by placing them on the stage. I couldn't endure my agony any longer and finally joined the throng of almond-eyed innocents where I could stretch my weary limbs and be at ease. At the end of the performance, there were a couple of dozen Chinese infants and one grown-up American on the stage forming a human fringe to the miscellaneous aggregation of actors, musicians, and attendants.

There was no opportunity to discuss business with the steel merchant in the midst of this grotesque mixture of humanity. We made an appointment for the next day.

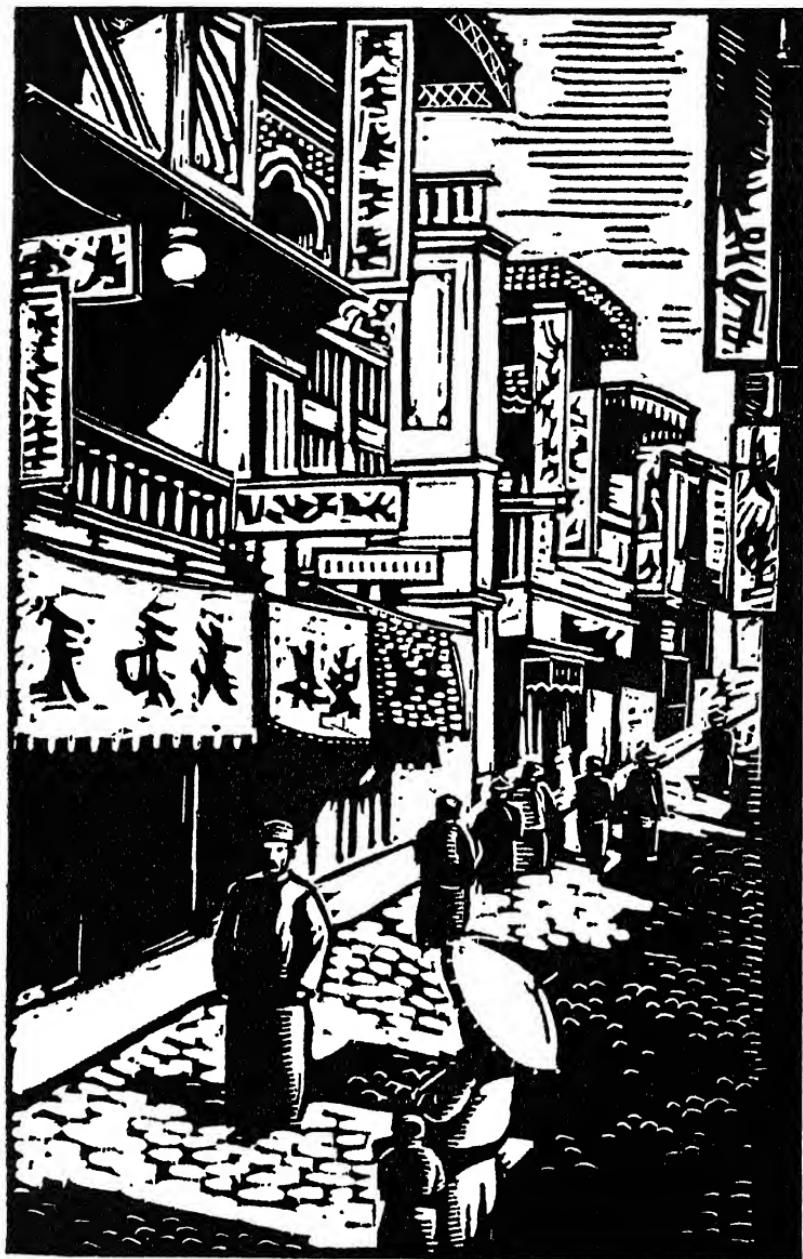
A Chinese is never pressed for time. What are a few

days or weeks in comparison to the thousands of years of the Chinese Empire? They believe in an exchange of courtesy and hospitality, and the foreigner who is successful in China must curb his speed and conform to custom.

The American Chamber of Commerce is active in bringing about an agreeable contact between the foreigner and the Chinese. It sends delegations to the various industrial centers where they are entertained by similar organizations of the natives. They, in turn, come to Shanghai or some other city where they are given a foreign dinner, conducted through the American factories and, where there is a harbor, taken aboard the United States men-of-war.

The most memorable Chamber-of-Commerce trip during my most recent two years in China was an expedition to Hangchow in the Province of Chekiang. A score of Americans with their wives departed from Shanghai in two private cars attached to the regular train to be the guests of the native chamber of Hangchow. We arrived about midnight and were greeted at the station by a committee of merchants and a couple of Chinese bands. Our two coaches were shunted to a sidetrack and here we were installed during our sojourn.

The following morning fifty sedan chairs, decorated with Chinese and American flags, were assembled at the station and, accompanied by our courteous hosts, we started on our way to visit the famous temples in the surrounding hills. We made an imposing parade as we slowly wended our way through the city and around the lake to the wooded country beyond. The streets were in holiday attire; crowds of the chronically curious con-



gregated to look us over, and shopkeepers temporarily suspended trade as we went by.

Hangchow is, perhaps, the most progressive city in China exclusively under native jurisdiction. Many of its main business thoroughfares have been widened and paved with red clay; substantial public edifices have been erected; the silk mills and provincial mints have been equipped with modern machinery; good schools and colleges exist, and a splendid boulevard extends along one side of the lake. This lake, although many hundreds of years old, is artificial, and surrounds several islands beautified by gardens, temples, and pagodas. The ancient Stump Pagoda, standing on the shore, is a stately relic of the past and an imposing landmark.

From the lake, thickly-wooded hills rise in gentle slopes and here are hidden many attractive tea houses and picturesque temples. Sturdy coolies carried our sedan chairs on their calloused and swollen shoulders, and we were soon lost in the forests beyond the city. We rode on and on, stopping many times to visit Buddhist and Confucian temples. At noon we ate a meal of Chinese *chow* in one of the joss houses. On our return we were conducted through a silk plant and were shown cocoons in different stages of their development.

Early the following morning the Chinese Chamber of Commerce provided us with private rickshas, and we made a tour of the industrial plants of the city. We inspected several silk mills and a provincial mint where silver dollars were being turned out as indifferently as if they were tin buttons. There were no apparent precautions against theft; money was left about in unprotected

places, and opportunities for a kleptomaniac were never more numerous. Perhaps some of the workmen were vigilant and armed to meet emergencies.

We were the guests of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for tiffin. The concluding function of our sojourn was a dinner in our honor that evening, given jointly by the Military Governor, General Lu Yung-hsiang and the Civil Governor, Mr. Shen King-chien. These two dignitaries sat side by side at the head of the table, the Military Governor on the right, thus indicating that he was the ranking official of the province.

General Lu Yung-hsiang of Chekiang Province is considered one of the most enlightened *tuchuns* of China, and much of the progress of the city of Hangchow is due to his efforts. Farsighted Chinese and foreigners, interested in the welfare of the country, were encouraged when he denounced in most definite terms the whole *tuchun* system, stating that it was the real millstone about the neck of the nation. He substantiated his declaration by resigning the military governorship as an example to the war lords of other provinces. His renunciation seemed high-minded and patriotic, but the magnanimous well-wishers of the Chinese Republic received a crushing blow when he assumed a post of higher rank, entitled Director of Rehabilitation of the Province of Chekiang, which he himself created! In this exalted rôle he retained all the powers of military governor under the guise of a new designation, and less than three years later directed the troops of Chekiang against the forces of the Province of Kiangsu, in which Shanghai is situated.

In addition to the efforts of the American Chamber of

Commerce to create pleasant relations between the Chinese and foreigners, there is the medium of the Union Club in Shanghai, composed of British, American, and Chinese members and organized a few years ago for the purpose of affording a social meeting place for Occidentals and Orientals. The formation of this society was necessary, for all the foreign clubs have a general rule prohibiting the entrance of Chinese to their premises except in the capacity of servants. A similar regulation excludes the natives from the parks in the foreign concessions.

An American friend of mine, on his first trip to China, was staying at the Shanghai Club and, not being aware of this rule, made an appointment with a native official of high standing to meet him in his room to discuss business matters. The dignitary arrived very late. At the conclusion of the interview, the American suggested another meeting at the same place. The Chinese became flustered and hesitatingly stated that he would be glad to see my friend anywhere except at the Shanghai Club. Upon solicitation he explained with embarrassment that the *boy* at the main door had refused to allow him to enter and that, after much difficulty and delay, he was permitted to come in through the kitchen.

The same regulation exists in the capital where contact between foreigners and Chinese is much more general than in Shanghai. It is interesting to note, however, that the British Minister, in an address at an annual meeting of the Peking Club, stated that he considered the time had arrived when Chinese should be admitted to membership; and he suggested that a beginning be made by taking in fifteen natives. I do not know whether or not favorable

action has been taken, but the Minister's recommendation was received with considerable approbation.

Westerners in China have acquired the native characteristic of blending business and pleasure, but theirs is a more salubrious mixture for it includes, in addition to social entertainment and conviviality, a liberal dose of sports—a pastime little patronized by the Chinese. Although Shanghai is the largest and most active foreign business center in the country, it is one of the best organized playgrounds in the world. The Occidentals who reside there permanently have their tennis courts, paper hunts, golf and race courses, football and cricket matches, and their country and social clubs.

Situated in the heart of the city is the Race Course, which is the center of athletics. The course provides, in addition to the track, a conveniently-located playground on which foreigners can indulge in all outdoor activities. The races themselves are a picturesque and colorful phase of Shanghai life, and the spring and autumn meets are the two outstanding sporting events of the year. Banks and business houses close for several days during Race Week, and nearly all alien inhabitants, as well as thousands of Chinese, place money on their favorite ponies. The first prize of the Sweepstake is the equivalent of about one hundred thousand dollars in American currency, and the price of a ticket approximates five dollars.

In the outlying districts are the Hunjao and Kiangwan Golf Clubs; and in the city the British have their Rugby and cricket associations, the Americans their baseball and football teams, and the different national country clubs their scores of tennis courts. In addition, there is a large

rowing club with crews representing many countries; and an international regatta is held annually at Henlee. In the winter months a weekly paper-hunt takes place, and horseback riding is an all-year-round pastime.

Shanghai is the metropolis of the Far East and one of the great ports of the world; but about the only definite knowledge the average American has of this city is that it contains the longest bar in existence. The actual length of this bar is evidently a source of widespread curiosity, for scores of persons have inquired about it of me alone. To satisfy this general craving for information, I measured it and take pleasure in stating that I found it to be one hundred and twenty-five feet from end to end. I have been told, however, that the Shanghai Club is contemplating adding to it another twenty-five feet.

In this city of clubs, the Shanghai Club is the oldest and the one with the most tradition. It is predominantly British. The French Club, conducted by the French residents but international in its membership, is a social and tennis organization. The Race Club is an important and popular institution. The British Country Club is one of the oldest social centers of the city.

The American community is also well provided with such societies. The American Club, with nearly one thousand members, largely business men, lately moved into its new six-story quarters. This building cost more than five hundred thousand dollars and has much to offer, including a library of ten thousand volumes. The Columbia Country Club, another American institution, recently hung out the latchkey of its new home, an edifice which was built at a cost of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

I understand that the American Woman's Club is contemplating a campaign for a building. Equipped with the foregoing assortment of social centers, the American colony of three thousand five hundred residents is well provided with entertainment.

Shanghai has been called the cocktail belt. It is the gayest spot in the Orient and is renowned for its night life, festive celebrations, and its huge cocktail shakers. Chinese artisans have turned their clever hands to making these containers, some of which boast proportions of three feet in length and six inches in diameter and are not uncommon novelties. One foreigner tried to outstrip all competitors by introducing, at a party of which he was the host, a pewter cocktail shaker six feet in length and two feet in diameter. Brought into the presence of the assembled guests by two servants from whose stalwart shoulders it was suspended by means of a thick bamboo pole and ropes, it looked like a torpedo. Fortunately, it was not entirely full of liquid cheer; for if it had been, it might have been as disastrous as its appearance.

The social life of the American community of Shanghai revolves largely around the Columbia Country Club. One of this organization's annual celebrations is known as the Red Dog Party, a function which is supposed to be a representation of life in an old western mining camp. I have heard indirectly that these performances are to be discontinued and I hope that my information is correct, for they have not contributed to the enhancement of the reputation of Americans in China; nor has the fact that many leading Americans of Shanghai danced on the roof of the Carlton Café until the early hours of the morning

when the body of Warren C. Harding, late President of the United States, was lying in state in Washington.

The social affairs at the British Country Club may be a little stiff and formal, but they are gatherings which bring no reproach upon those who take part in them; and the celebrations of the French Club are occasions of fun and merriment untainted by any features which lead to unfavorable criticism.

The annual Washington's Birthday Ball is an example of what the American community in Shanghai can do. This function is a refined and dignified affair which brings forth high and merited praise from all quarters. It is lamentable that our good name is compromised by indiscretions at other times.





CHAPTER XIII

CHINESE CUSTOMS

CHINA is a land of inversion. Her civilization has developed in channels so alien to those of the West that many of her customs seem to be a reversal of the natural order of things. This characteristic is at once apparent to Europeans and Americans. That Chinese women wear trousers and the men skirts, that white is the official color of mourning, that students study aloud, that the printed page reads from right to left, that they bury their dead on the surface of the ground, that they use chopsticks, and that they shake hands with themselves instead of with each other are facts well known throughout the world. These, and many other practices, appear strange and illogical and impress the outsider with the peculiarities of the Chinese, but how reasonable some of them are! Shaking hands with oneself, for example, is a safer and more sanitary method of greeting, especially in hot weather, than the promiscuous gripping in the Occidental World. I fully realized this, for I once rode in a train compartment for several hours with an American with whom I shook hands on parting and who came down the following day with smallpox. I didn't acquire the disease, but I had many moments of anxiety.

If one is in search of eccentricities and mental twists in John Chinaman, the field of medicine furnishes fertile ground. Western physicians agree that the native doctors know little or nothing of surgery but admit that they have gathered a few rudiments of medicine during the centuries of the experience. A leading German practitioner in Shanghai informed me that an intensive and exhaustive research of Chinese therapeutics had never been made by foreigners, but that a number of superficial observations

had revealed that the native medicine men had developed certain powders and ointments, compounded from herbs and other ingredients, which are efficacious in the treatment of disease. They have learned by experience that quinine and castor oil are efficient remedies and prescribe them freely.

However, the practice of medicine in China is very primitive and, although foreign physicians and hospitals are spreading enlightenment, the rank and file of the people, even in the advanced communities of the treaty ports, cling to the services of the native practitioner. It is not uncommon for a wealthy Chinese to summon several doctors when he is seriously ill. One of his own countrymen is first consulted. If his treatment is unsuccessful, two or three Europeans are called in, often when the patient is on the verge of expiring. He listens to the diagnosis of each and decides to take the medicine of the one whose prescription meets his fancy or costs the least to purchase at the drug store. If he fails to recover, his family is most indignant and considers that the doctor is responsible for his death. An American physician once told me that he occasionally arrived at the house of a native sufferer to find another foreigner on the ground. In such instances, he naturally withdrew and declined to have anything to do with the case. The Chinese, however, never divulge the fact that several doctors have been called, and a physician is usually unaware that others of his profession are being consulted at the same time.

In the interior of the country, almost unbelievable incidents occur. I have heard of a coolie who came to a mission clinic with a vicious-looking wound in his skull.

When asked how he acquired it, he explained that he had a pain in his head and had jabbed a hole in the roof of his cranium to let it out! A patient afflicted with stomach trouble or other abdominal ailments is sometimes subjected to the harrowing experience of having the affected organ pierced with long needles. Can one imagine a more futile and diabolical remedy? However, Chinese seem to be indifferent to pain and torture. The women resort to energetic methods to beautify themselves. They remove almost invisible down from their faces by a cord or thread, so ingeniously twisted and pulled that the offending growth is yanked out by the roots. The men submit themselves to numerous ordeals at the hands of the barber. In addition to shaving and hair-cutting, the tonsorial artist will scrape out the under side of a victim's eyelids or clean his ears with long sharp-pointed sticks.

Sore throats and miscellaneous aches are "cured" by pinching; the flesh of the ailing parts is compressed between two large copper coins until painful bruised stripes appear on the skin. This incredible performance is based on the theory that a counterirritant is beneficial. Crushed cockroaches are sometimes used as poultices for centipede bites or the stings of other insects. Dangerous-looking sores, to which disinfectants would be applied in the West, are treated with questionable preparations and exposed to every possible contamination and infection.

One is inclined to believe that the administrations of Chinese doctors would simply make the agony of a dying man complete. However, they do sometimes effect astonishing cures. A friend of mine had a coolie in his employ who had neglected a cut on his foot with the result that

his leg up to the knee became frightfully swollen and infected with poison. Amputation seemed to be the only means of arresting further inflammation of the limb, but the native refused to go to a foreign hospital. One evening his employer saw him at the iron fence in front of the house talking to a ragged and disreputable man. He was a Chinese doctor, and he prescribed some ointment to be applied to the hopeless-looking leg of the servant. In twenty-four hours the inflammation had disappeared, and in a few weeks the coolie had entirely recovered.

From Chinese medical practice to suicide is not a great step. Self-destruction is a national diversion and is attempted on the slightest provocation. Weird methods are often adopted. A current belief among the women is that the swallowing of their wedding rings will immediately liberate them from life's fetters. This procedure to end everything is frequently resorted to but seldom proves fatal. My wife's *amah* employed the most common means of suicide. Happily, she was unsuccessful, for she was rushed to a foreign hospital where proper emetics were administered. She drank a solution of water and sulphur match heads. We had difficulty in ascertaining the cause of this desperate step but finally learned that she had had a quarrel with her husband, with whom she was generally on the best of terms.

China would not be complete without her countless beggars. These poor and wretched creatures throng the city streets and village lanes, presenting most distressing scenes as they pursue the passer-by, their hands extended in a plea for coins. No one has any idea of the misery of these unfortunate mendicants unless one has actually

seen them. Many are victims of disease, and others are deformed, mentally and physically. Such afflictions are considered assets with which to arouse the sympathies of their countrymen and strangers and to enable them to ply their trade more efficiently and with greater profit. Some of them are fakers, however, and use every ruse and trick to deceive the public.

I have seen a beggar made up so cleverly that he appeared to have been the gory victim of a recent horrible accident. Close examination revealed that he was covered with a liberal dose of red paint. When I laughed at him and told him to get out, he scampered away with a grin on his face. In Hankow I saw a dozen fakers sitting tailor-fashion in the street; and whenever a pedestrian approached, they bumped their foreheads in unison on the pavement. Each one of these simple creatures had a lump between his temples as large as a duck's egg.

As I passed the station in Tangshan, a half-witted beggar preceded my ricksha, crouching in the manner of a beetle and balancing himself on his head, the top of which was a raw sore caused by friction with the gravel of the road. When I reached the village, a score of naked children and unfortunate adults on all fours surrounded me like a lot of hungry animals. As soon as I escaped from this dejected gang, I was pursued by a most loathsome man, with greasy beard and long hair matted with dirt and vermin, his only garment a loin cloth. To complete this figure of repugnance, his chest and back were covered with a frightful eruption which he continually probed and kept in a state of irritation. In the French Concession in Shanghai, I frequently encountered one particu-

larly simple beggar who crawled about on his hands and knees and growled like a bear.

As incredible as these sights may seem, I saw one that outstrips them all. In passing through a village near Tientsin, I was followed by a most forlorn and offensive mendicant who had driven the sharp edge of a native razor in his forehead above his eyes. This rusty implement had evidently been inserted a number of years, for the flesh had grown about it in such a way that the blade was kept in place firmly enough to support the handle which extended out above his nose.

Begging is a profession and is chosen as one would select any reputable vocation. Once in the brotherhood, the mendicant makes use of all the devices of self-torture and chicanery that the trade supplies. In most cities there are guilds to which these parasites belong. According to general report, the beggars association of Peking sent fifty thousand dollars to the victims of the typhoon which caused so much destruction in Swatow in 1922.

What a pleasing contrast to the wretched homeless beggars is presented by the Chinese servants employed in foreign houses!

These domestics are clean, well dressed and, as a rule, faithful and efficient. The American housewife is invariably envious when I describe to her the arrangements which existed in our comparatively modest ménage in Shanghai.

Our retinue consisted of five persons: a *boy* who acted as butler and chambermaid and valet and who had general supervision of the other servants; a cook who pre-

pared all the meals and did the marketing; an assistant cook, a lad learning the culinary art, who was the scullion; a coolie who built the fires, scrubbed the floors, and ran the errands; and an *amah*, the only woman in our employ. She was my wife's personal maid who, in addition to this rôle, washed and ironed a large portion of our linen, mended, sewed, and knitted.

They were an exceptionally capable crew. The *boy* was particularly efficient and was by far the best servant I have ever had. He cleaned and pressed my suits every time I made a change and kept my wardrobe in perfect order; he packed my luggage for a trip, never forgetting a thing, not even a book he had seen me reading; he knew the number of lumps of sugar every lady took in her tea the second time she came; he always remembered the particular tastes of guests and directed the cook to prepare certain dishes for their delectation when, by mysterious insight, he knew they were invited; and he was always on the job. The *amah* was a cheerful and devoted little soul who performed her duties most conscientiously with a smile. The two cooks and the coolie were satisfactory in the performance of their work.

The sum of the monthly wages of our domestic staff was approximately the equivalent of thirty-five dollars in American currency, and they supplied their own food. An "up-country" employer can have a similar corps at half this outlay. In addition to their wages, the domestics received from the native merchants a commission of five per cent on all bills, which gratuity in reality came out of the pocket of their employer. Their incomes were

swelled by endless squeeze, and hardly an article in the household could be mentioned that wasn't trimmed in one way or another.

Four or five servants are considered about the minimum number necessary to minister to the needs of a foreigner wishing to maintain "face" with the Chinese. Many families, however, have a staff of a dozen or more consisting of several *boys* and coolies, *amahs* for the children and the laundry, house tailors, gardeners, and chauffeurs. A special coolie for the canary bird is rare!

Our assistant cook, or small cook, as he was commonly called, had fifteen years to his credit and was about the size of a goldfish. He seldom ventured beyond the kitchen door, confining himself to the precincts of the stove and the sink. One day my wife noticed that the little chap was missing and, when she inquired about him from the *boy*, she was informed that he had gone to the country to be married! He returned in a few days without his helpmate, whom he had left with his mother. I was perplexed to know how he and his wife could live on two dollars a month, for this was his wage, but I was completely baffled when I learned from the *amah* that the two dollars never found their way to the pocket for which they were intended, and that the poor little devil of a small cook received nothing at all!

Chinese servants work night and day. They are delighted if their "Missie" entertains frequently and never object to the number of guests. They seldom take a holiday, the only respite from their labors being a vacation of a day or two at Chinese New Year when the entire country celebrates for a period of two or three weeks.



The industry of the lower classes is a striking contrast to the lack of diligence so noticeable in officials and well-to-do merchants. Government bureaus in Peking seldom open before eleven o'clock in the morning, and shop-keepers have a lazy time sitting about their stores or lolling over the counters. A story is told of some wealthy and prominent Chinese who were invited to watch an exhibition match of tennis between two foreign champions. They made no remarks about the marvelous skill of the players, for they were not at all impressed by the game. They commented, however, upon the amount of hard work involved and asked why the coolies were not made to do it.

Everything halts for Chinese New Year. I went to the native city of Shanghai on the occasion of one of these festivals thinking that I was going to see gorgeous processions and spectacular celebrations. I found every shop closed and the streets almost entirely deserted. The only signs of activity were the crowds gathered about the numerous puppet shows, the diminutive actors of which were most cleverly manipulated by the showmen. The advent of the New Year is largely observed in the home behind closed doors, and it is here that the family gathers and makes merry with food, drink, and gambling. At this time of the year friends must pay formal calls and exchange cards, felicitations, and good wishes for long life. A foreigner who desires to comply with the custom is a busy man during this festival.

The respect for ancestors is a well-known Chinese characteristic. Every obedient son, in anticipatory veneration, spends considerable time in preparing for the death of his

father and mother as well as in expressing and manifesting the reverence in which he holds those of his honorable forbears who have passed away long before. Many times during a year a *shroff*, or salesman, would disappear from my office and remain away a week or ten days. On returning, such a truant would invariably state that he had made a trip to his birthplace, usually some inaccessible village, to arrange the details of the funeral and make provision for the tombs of his parents who, at the time, were enjoying perfect health and happiness. These frequent exits were most disturbing to the business of the firm.

China is a large cemetery. Grave mounds and exposed coffins cover the countryside in every direction, and many disintegrated and grawsome tombs lie unmolested in the cities. We had a half dozen in our back yard. In accordance with the regulations in the treaty ports, the body of a deceased foreigner must be buried within twenty-four hours after death. The remains of a Chinese may linger about for weeks, or even years, until the arrival of the most auspicious day for interment and until the propitious spot is selected. In Canton one sees many buildings constructed for the purpose of housing the dead of wealthy families during the period preceding their final disposition. I was shown coffins that had been on the waiting list for two years. The poor use fields as cemeteries. Many a grave on the Shanghai golf course makes an excellent bunker, and others serve as vantage points for spectators at the winter paper-hunts.

Although the Chinese tael is a valuable unit—and if one has a hundred thousand of them one has a real fortune—

the people show a patience with the monetary system which the Irish would not long endure without frequent riots or a general revolution. Each province mints its own money and, in consequence, many different kinds of silver dollars are in circulation. Foreign and native banknotes are issued, some of the last named being regarded with suspicion. The value of these dollars fluctuates with the prices of silver and copper. The number of copper coins to a dollar varies from day to day in the same place, and is different in the various provinces. In Shanghai one obtains about one hundred and fifty of these coins for a dollar, while in some interior districts one can procure two hundred. This erratic system has given rise to money exchanges which are as thick as soda fountains in America and which do as profitable a business. Big and little money is a natural consequence.

The involved state of pecuniary affairs is attributable to the provincial mints which flood the country with deflated coins. The avaricious officials buy large quantities of imported copper ingots which they coin into money regardless of the needs of the people. The net profits made by the directors of these mints is from forty to fifty per cent, and they easily become fabulously rich at the expense of the public. Imagine the plunder which accrues to the officials of a coinage mill devouring several thousand tons of metal in a year. I know such an official who made millions of dollars in this way in one season.

As cumbersome as the monetary system is in the large cities and along the coast, it reaches its maximum of inconvenience in the remote sections of the country. The small *cash*, with the square hole in the centers, were

largely eliminated from many provinces by the Japanese who bought them up during the World War for the copper they contained. These coins, however, are still in circulation in many parts of the interior, where a string of something like three thousand individually worthless units equals one American dollar.

As impractical as these *cash* appear to be, they are the acme of convenience when compared with other coins of the realm. In some of the inland villages, dollars are made of iron and are as circumferential as soup plates and sombreros. A missionary from a remote post informed me that a sturdy donkey was required to carry the equivalent of ten dollars in American currency for a modest shopping expedition, and that it took three days to transport in carts the money contributed by natives to the building fund of a Christian hospital!





CHAPTER XIV

A STAMPEDE IN JAVA

THE doctrine of "Keep moving" was still my guiding principle. After nearly two years in China, I decided to strike out for other parts. Although I had lived in Shanghai during this period, I had not suffered from immobility; for I had made one trip up the Yangtze River, one along the coast to the North, two to Hongkong and Canton in the South, several to Peking and its vicinity, and a dozen to inland points from Shanghai.

My wife and I sailed on Christmas Day on a steamer of the Peninsula and Oriental Steamship Company. We had no definite itinerary beyond Singapore, an ideal spot from which to radiate. I can imagine nothing more attractive than making this port a base for an indefinite period and exploring the Strait Settlements, Siam, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, the Celebes, and countless other interesting places.

After a few days in Singapore, we decided to go to Java. Since the European War this Dutch possession has been a magnet for tourists, and it is rapidly becoming the most classic example of a land of dehydrated sight-seeing. The scurrying globe-trotters go there in droves from Singapore, and the around-the-world boats now touch at Batavia and Sourabaya, enabling their passengers to scamper through the leading communities of the island. The enterprising Dutchman has installed a series of bathtubs along the main highways and has brought the inaccessible scenes and aspects of Javanese life to the hotel verandas so that the luxury-seeking and hardship-avoiding tourist can enjoy the "realities" of native activities and customs from a comfortable chair with a glass of soda pop at his elbow.

One of the around-the-world ships called at Singapore

when we were there. Down the gangway filed a succession of tortoise-shell-rimmed glasses and Eversharp pencils. An English newspaper remarked editorially that either spectacles must be very cheap in the United States or most Americans must have weak eyes. This perspiring horde was turned loose on Singapore. Many of them drove around the island, others bolted to the leading hotels for food and ice water, and still others went shopping.

What easy victims these innocent travellers are in the hands of the cunning, shrewd, and unscrupulous Oriental merchant throughout the Far East. He lives in anticipation of their arrival, boosts prices the day their ship drops anchor, and makes enormous profits at the expense of their ignorance and inexperience. A native shopkeeper in Djokjakarta, Java, most frankly informed me that all his prices would be advanced two or three hundred per cent while the tourist band was in his city. However, the native dealers are not the sole beneficiaries of bloated purses, for I know an American proprietor of a curio stall in a foreign hotel in a large Chinese city who is able to retire after three short years of successful selling to his transient fellow-countrymen and women.

Singapore is one of the least desirable places in the East in which to buy Mandarin coats, but the ever-gullible tourist doesn't know it. A not uncommon incident in that city occurs when a fair traveller enters a silk shop and asks to see some of these Oriental robes.

When she finds something that meets her fancy, she inquires, "How much is this one?"

"Eighty dollars," is the shopkeeper's reply.

"Gold or Straits dollars?" the woman asks.

"Gold, Missie, I any time talkee gold dollar, American Missie," is the answer of the slick Chinese salesman, who originally meant Straits dollars but was quick to take advantage of the purchaser's ignorance.

The simple and credulous tourist digs into her purse and hands over eighty good American dollars and departs entirely satisfied. If she had been wiser, she could have had the garment, at the end of a half hour's bargaining and bickering, for sixty Straits dollars, the equivalent of thirty dollars in American money.

The tourist agencies can arrange an itinerary in such detail that the only exertion required of the fastidious traveller during his entire sojourn in Java will be to feed and dress himself. An automobile will call for him at Singapore and take him and his luggage to his steamer. Another automobile will meet him on his arrival at Batavia and whisk him off to Bandoeng, Garoet, Wonosobo, the Borobudur, the volcanoes, or wherever the itinerary directs. Comfortable hotels, baths, and bacon and eggs will greet him all along the route, and his associates throughout the entire trip will be his fellow passengers. By this smug method he should be able to complete a two-weeks' dash in Java without being disturbed by an intelligent idea about the country and its people.

I must confess most penitently that this is the way I saw Java. My wife and I, accompanied by a Californian and his wife, placed ourselves at the mercy of a tourist agency and swallowed the island in a capsule. An automobile called for us at our hotel in Singapore and transported us and our baggage to the steamer. Everything was installed in our cabin without the raising of a finger or

a single thought on my part. On board was a crowd of tourists. Heavy and opulent, apparently accustomed to such routine, they sat comfortably in reclining chairs, blinking at the water in the hot sunlight. White-clad Dutch Colonials were bidding farewell to friends on shore or were drinking steins of beer at wicker tables on the ship. Coolies of every shade and description were carrying heavy trunks and bags up the gangways. At last the steamer got under way, and my first experience as a one-hundred-per-cent tourist had begun.

Our motor trip in Java proceeded without a single hitch; our chauffeur was on hand each morning with automatic precision; hotels were found in their designated notches, and guides jumped out of their proper pigeonholes when needed. We were spared the necessity of thinking, and had nothing to do but to gaze stupidly at the landscape.

From Batavia we hurried to the hills to Bandoeng for tiffin. In a foreign hotel we ate *rijsttofel*, a Dutch adaptation of a Javanese meal, consisting of rice and countless trimmings such as fried fish, eggs, vegetables, chutney, and a huge collection of other dishes. We were served by a caravan of fourteen servants, each bearing a bowl. We were thrilled to death!

We had no time to lose for we had to make Garoet, nearly one hundred and fifty miles distant, for dinner. We arrived without mishap or adventure and put up at the comfortable Dutch-owned Hotel Ngamplang. After a pleasant sojourn of a couple of days at this European summer resort, we rushed on our way to Koeningen. Here we were installed in an agreeable hotel conducted by Javanese. "What an experience," was the unanimous

chorus of the other tourists in the party, "but one night of it is enough!"

Wonosobo was our next destination. The Californian and I had become weary of this machine-like process and we decided to inject a little variety, however slight, into our jaunt. We started out in search of durian.

Every village was reeking with the odor of limburger cheese. It was the aroma of the famous durian, a large thorny green fruit, indigenous to the tropics and most prolific. Its fame is not due so much to its obnoxious odor as to its reputation for having exceptionally invigorating qualities which cause it to be in great demand by the natives. The Californian and I were determined to taste the fruit and had been mustering courage for the ordeal for several days.

At Wonosobo we drove to the public market, where we purchased several of the alluring durians and returned to the hotel. The odor they exuded almost asphyxiated us, and our automobile immediately acquired the fragrance of a tub of ancient and particularly mature cheese. We feared that the hotel proprietor would resent the pollution of the atmosphere of his place with the stench of the fruit so we took our precious load around to the small veranda adjoining our bedrooms.

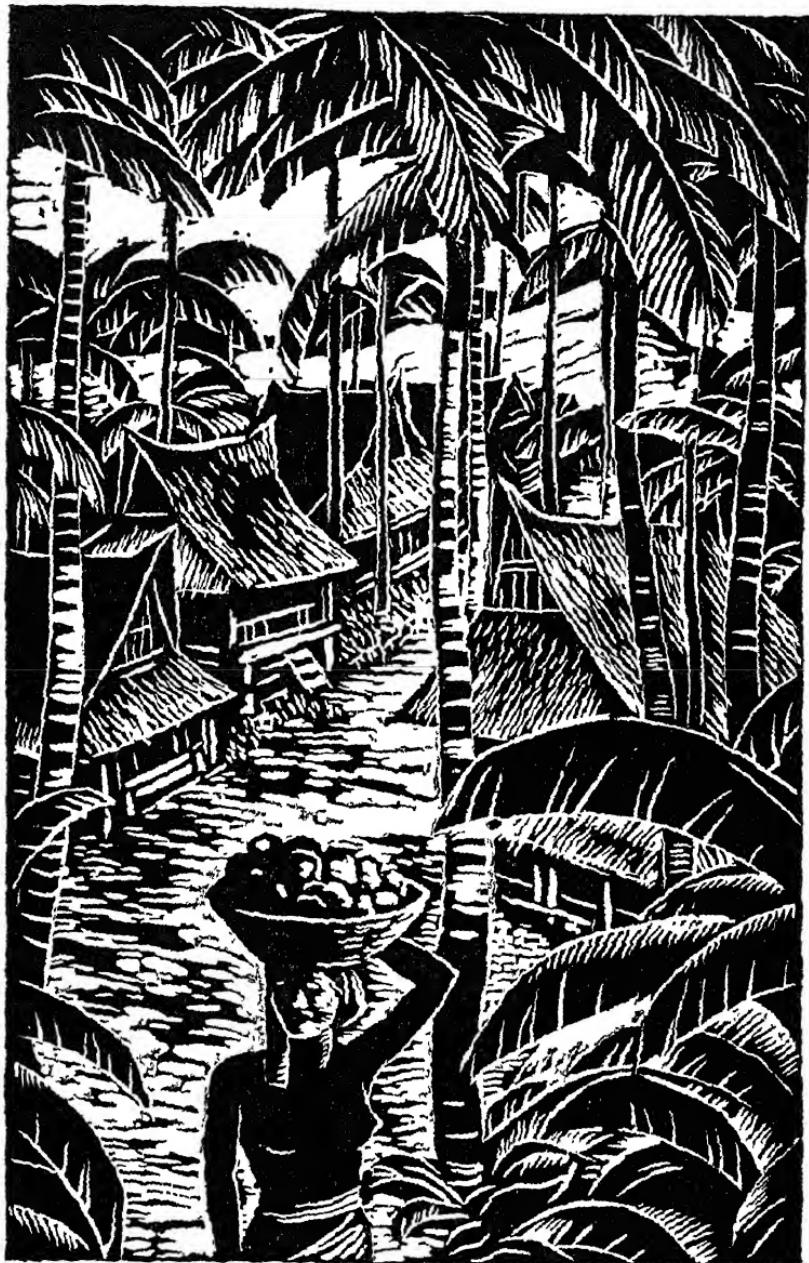
We summoned our respective wives, the Californian and I shook hands as though we were about to fulfill the conditions of a suicide pact, and then we proceeded to dissect one of the seductive durians. It was about the size of a large cantaloupe and somewhat oval in shape. Once opened, it looked innocent enough and resembled a cross between an albino watermelon and a gourd. In coura-

geous defiance of its offensive odor, we each took a small portion. As we survived, we served our wives.

This fruit should also be famous for its flavor which, inadequately described, may be said to taste like a mixture of limburger cheese and vanilla ice cream. Its invigorating qualities were apparently a legend, or perhaps we didn't eat a sufficient quantity, for we were unable to detect exhilarating or extraordinary effects of any kind.

We also purchased several other less-sensational fruit—mangoes, mangosteens, jack fruit, breadfruit, and cocoanuts. A mangosteen is a delightful delicacy. One opens its brown pink-lined covering to find a prize of juicy little white sections which have the subtle flavor of a highly-developed extract. Jack fruit and breadfruit, although larger, are somewhat similar to the durian in external and internal appearances, but possess none of its reputed characteristics.

From Wonosobo we departed to view the Borobudur, the famous ruins of an excavated Indian Buddhist monument in which are said to repose some of the ashes of Buddha. On a mountain road en route, our string of automobiles—for several other tourists were also making the trip—was suddenly arrested by a band of Javanese warriors with painted faces, long spears, and brilliant and abbreviated costumes. We all poured out of the motors to see the “wild men” perform a species of war dance. A number of them rode small dummy horses made of native matting and gave an exhibition of a cavalry charge. When this painful piece of mockery was finished, the actors, hardly able to conceal their laughter, took up a collection. The demonstration had been arranged by our guide and



was staged in the mountains in order that it might have the appearance of being a genuine and spontaneous performance.

We spent the following two days at Djokjakarta in a hotel saturated with luxury and comfort. The first evening on the spacious veranda the tourist agency tried to entertain us with what was called *Wajong Wong* and Java Dances. A score or more of hired Javanese arrayed in colorful robes and grotesque head-dresses awkwardly strutted about the hotel terrace for a couple of hours in a mechanical effort to reproduce an historical play and native dances. This preposterous sham was so obviously and repugnantly cut and dried that I got up and left the place in disgust.

My disgust, however, was destined to be further aggravated the next day when visiting the Water Palace, one of the historic ruins of Djokjakarta. The first sight to greet my eyes, as I passed through the imposing gate into the courtyard, was the inscription "Los Angeles" in large white letters on the front of the main building!

The following morning we arose long before daybreak and started in the darkness for Samarang on the coast. This was the only part of our trip on which our Dutch chauffeur didn't kill a chicken. Ordinarily he averaged a dozen a day and several times endangered our lives by running off the road in his effort to pursue these poor creatures which litter the highways of Java. This impossible bully killed over a hundred on our tour.

After daybreak, on our way to Samarang, I had one experience which wasn't on the tourist schedule. We had made a short detour from the main highway to view a

particularly beautiful landscape. As we approached our vantage point, scores of naked children came running from all the neighboring villages to meet us. Boys and girls scampered over the fields, converged toward our automobile, and followed us until we came to a stop. Nearly fifty of these happy bronze-skinned hopefuls grouped themselves around our car. All of them had wild flowers which they had hastily gathered with the idea of selling to us. Our party stepped out of the automobile and, from a promontory, viewed the surrounding country.

I soon returned to the car around which the Javanese youngsters were still congregated, for they interested me more than the landscape. At my approach, they began to scatter. I made a gesture to indicate that I was harmless, and in a minute we were on friendly terms. They then stood before me in such perfect formation and with such an expectant air that I decided to give them a physical drill. I gave my instructions in English. When I raised my arms on a level with my shoulders, my class of cheerful innocents all responded. I continued with a dozen exercises and my protégés, bubbling over with giggles, followed suit perfectly. As a gymnastic master to Javanese infants, I was undoubtedly a success. They thought the calisthenics great fun and wanted more. They were an appealing lot, their little bodies shining in the early morning sunlight and their faces beaming with happy smiles. When the drill was over, I amused them and myself by throwing coins into their midst. How eagerly they fought for the money! Each scramble resembled a heap of wriggling eels.

From Samarang we went by boat to Batavia, made a

hurried visit to the famous Botanic Gardens at Buitenzorg, and sailed for the Malay Peninsula the same day.

We arrived in Singapore, having completed our stampede in Java, exactly according to schedule. We had dashed about the interesting and beautiful island without effort or adventure and had returned with only a vague notion of the country and its people.





G.O.

CHAPTER XV

UNCONTAMINATED SUMATRA

SUMATRA is almost the perfect antithesis of Java. A wild and largely-unexplored country, sparsely populated and undeveloped, and still uncontaminated by an annual invasion of tourists, it presents a pleasing contrast to its neighbor. It will not be long, however, before the island will be unable to withstand the transient invasion from the West, for the around-the-world ships are already advertising stops at its ports, and the tourist agencies are making plans for its early conquest. Modern hotels will spring up over night, and one of the world's remaining frontiers will succumb to the advancing onslaught of uniformity.

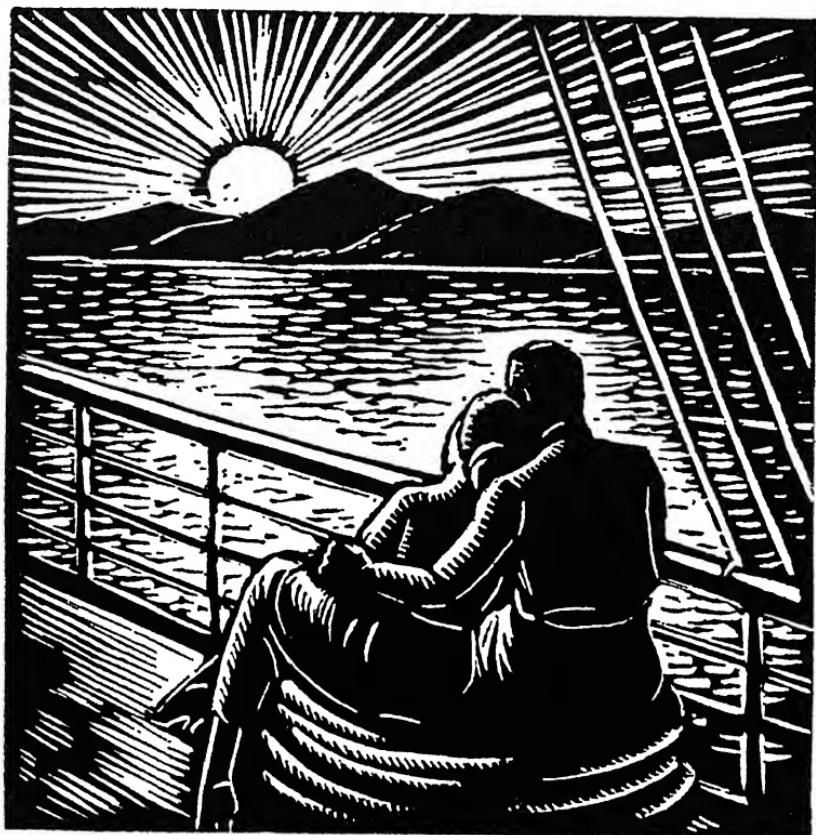
Situated immediately beneath the equator, with an area of fifty thousand five hundred and fifty-four miles, Java is approximately the size of the state of Alabama and has a population of nearly thirty-five million people. Sumatra, with an area of one hundred and sixty-one thousand six hundred and twelve square miles, straddles the equator, is a little larger than California, and has only about five million people. The inhabitants of Java are largely of a single race, while the population of Sumatra is a mixture of many Asiatic countries with a solid stratum of her own indigenous tribes. Chinese, Javanese, Malays, and Indians, with a sprinkling of Europeans, chiefly Dutch, have settled near the coast, while the aborigines and other semi-civilized peoples cling to the mountains and interior regions. Java is a highly-developed and completed product. Sumatra is a virgin land on the verge of exploitation. Countless descriptive volumes have been written about Java and her people. I have been unable to discover a single book in English on Sumatra, and the

only tourist guide on the island has discontinued its publication.

We sailed for Sumatra from Singapore on the S.S. *Van der Lijn*, a thousand-ton cargo boat with accommodation for only six first-class passengers. Traffic was not very heavy, for, besides my wife and me, a Chinese merchant was the only other first-cabin traveller. We went below to our stateroom but only to ascend posthaste, panting for air, for we were nearly stifled by the fumes of sulphur with which the ship was being disinfected. We remained on deck and dined with the captain and the engineer under a spreading canvas to protect us from the waning tropical sun.

What a magnificent evening followed! Sitting on a coil of rope and leaning against the rail, we drank in the beauties of a most glorious sunset, enjoyed the silent ripples of the sea, and inhaled the fresh clear atmosphere. Space and reality had been absorbed in the glow of the declining day. "Go on forever" was my impulsive command to the ship as we glided softly over the smooth deep green water. We were completely lost in the scene before us and forgot the troubles and disturbances of the world beyond.

Medan is the metropolis of Sumatra. It is situated a few miles from the coast, being sufficiently distant from the port of Belawan-Deli, with its low swampy land, to be a healthful and prosperous community. None of the resident foreigners of whom I inquired was able to give me any idea of the population of the city, but I should estimate it at approximately twenty thousand people, the majority being Chinese and Malays. It is an attractive tropical town with wide streets, good hotels, substantial



business buildings, and many residences well adapted to the hot climate.

From Medan, we set out in a small automobile for the mountains. The road led us through tropical vegetation and groves of cocoanut palms until we attained an elevation where cool clear air began to replace the hot steaming atmosphere of sea level. Luxuriant growth then gave way to fields of teak and tobacco. Miles and miles of the famous weed greeted us on both sides and stretched before us as far as we could see. Here and there, large sheds for drying the leaves were situated in the open spaces. From teak woods and tobacco fields, we came to rubber plantations. For many hours, as our car sped over the dusty island highway, we saw thousands upon thousands of rows of these trees. Signs of the United States and Good-year rubber companies, as well as those of numerous other foreign concerns, gave one an idea of their extensive holdings. From rubber, we came to tea plantations which covered the hillsides in all directions. In the course of a day, we passed through the center of the three leading industries of Sumatra.

Our destination was Prapat on *Toba Meer*, or Lake Toba. Shortly after leaving Pematang Saiantar, where we stopped for tiffin, we began climbing the steep and winding mountain road to the Toba Batak country in the vicinity of the lake. The only people we encountered on the way were groups of Bataks, the natives of this region. A dark-skinned, tall, well-built race they are, and they made an imposing procession as they filed by singly. The glistening bodies of the men were clothed only in *sarongs* and the women, clad in dark blue and usually bare to the

waist, walked erectly with bundles of market produce on their heads, while the children, arrayed in nothing but sunshine, tripped along in the rear. They appeared to be a wild and barbarous lot with their teeth filed off to the gums, red betel-nut juice dripping from the corners of their mouths, or plugs of black tobacco adhering to their swollen lips. Their faces were hardened and their demeanor unfriendly.

Lake Toba is an imposing body of water hidden in the mountains of Northern Sumatra at an elevation of three thousand feet above sea level. It is fifty miles long, thirty-five miles wide at one place, and its greatest depth is fifteen hundred feet. Nestled in the middle of this lake is the island of Samosir with a length of thirty miles and a width of ten or twelve. Countless Batak villages or *kampongs* are located on the shores of this unusual body of water and on the island.

We made Prapat, not to be confused with Parapat near by, our first headquarters. We were happily housed under the thatched roof of a Dutch-owned hotel, and from there we radiated in our exploration of the neighboring country. Situated on the lake, lying at the base of the Boekit Barisan Mountains, and possessing a climate unrivaled even in Southern California, it was an ideal place in which to linger. We had a most wonderful view of the mountain ranges; we took a daily plunge in the clear blue water of Lake Toba, and we had the use of a decrepit, but none-the-less acceptable, motor launch which enabled us to visit points of interest along the shore.

Apparently little is known of the different tribes that inhabit the highlands of Sumatra. Many of them, still

wild and primitive, confine themselves to the hills and live in complete isolation. In Achin, in the extreme north of the island, the Atfeh and Lajoer tribes, although nominally under the jurisdiction of Holland, have not yet been completely conquered, notwithstanding the fact that Dutch troops occupy the country and have removed the native chiefs. A resident Dutchman informed me that the campaigns to subdue these people had already cost over a hundred thousand lives and several million guilders.

Southern Sumatra is inhabited partly by the Kobus, of whom next to nothing is known, and about whom there is much speculation. They are said to be short of stature and mentally undeveloped and to live in the trees like monkeys, building no dwellings of any kind, existing on nuts and fruit, and going about completely naked. They never come in contact with other tribes but flee to the hills like jack rabbits on sighting any human beings not belonging to their race. White men have never yet penetrated their habitation. They shyly and cautiously creep down from their lofty retreat to the lowlands where they leave fruit and nuts in conspicuous places in the woods to be exchanged by passers-by for food, trinkets, and tobacco. A Dutch explorer informed me that in all his travels he had succeeded in coming in contact with only one member of this tribe. Perhaps the Kobus are the missing link. Some scientific expedition should be organized to go after them.

The Makmaks are another primitive race inhabiting the inaccessible regions of southern Sumatra. Although exact information about them is scanty, they are reputed to be only one rung higher on the social ladder than their

cousins, the Kobus. They are said to build crude houses and to engage, to a limited extent, in agriculture. The Makmaks might be investigated by the same scientific expedition that pursues the Kobus.

Inhabiting the great plateau which surrounds Lake Toba are the two large tribes of Bataks, the Toba Bataks and the Karo Bataks, and together they number over half a million people. They are supposed to be related to the Dyaks of Borneo, the wild head-hunters of that island. These Sumatrans are but a decade removed from cannibalism, for only a few years ago the Dutch authorities succeeded in subduing them after long periods of guerrilla warfare. Even now it is solely the strict check of foreign rule which keeps them in subjection, although they still practice some of their ancient barbarous customs in remote districts.

The Toba Bataks, the less advanced of the two tribes, occupy the southern shores of the lake and the vast hinterland. Sixty thousand of them also dwell on the island of Samosir. They live in *kampongs* which consist of groups of thatched, horned-roofed houses elevated on five-foot poles. A pigsty is almost immaculate in contrast to the filth of a Toba Batak village. Usually situated on a knoll in a clump of trees and surrounded by a stone wall, the *kampong* is approached through a mire of mud. Once within the compound, one is greeted by the sickly snarls of a dozen mangy dogs. Pigs, chickens, naked children, and half-clad adults wallow in the refuse in the space between the two facing rows of houses. These dwellings are generally entered from beneath through a small hole, the access to which is a ladder. As I thrust my head

through the floor of one of these houses, I was immediately confronted by a black naked boy of about three years of age. At the sight of me, the poor little chap was nearly frightened to death and burst loudly into tears. The interior, containing the most meager equipment, is one large dark loft in which a dozen families—men, women, and children—huddle together and try to live. This depressing attic is tightly closed at night to insure absolute lack of air. Each *kampong* has a separate house for the girls of marriageable age and another for the young men.

The food is primitive, consisting almost entirely of red rice mixed with syrup and chopped meat (often dog) or fish. In the absence of table accessories of any kind, this unsanitary mess is eaten out of a wooden bowl, into which everyone dips his unwashed fists.

The dead are exhumed after a few years, and twenty or thirty skulls are placed in a single tomb having a man's face in stone at one end and a woman's at the other. Until a short time ago, the Toba Bataks burned persons afflicted with leprosy by setting fire to the house they inhabited. The bodies of women who died in childbirth were considered polluted and were left indefinitely where they happened to lie at the time of death. Sufferers from tuberculosis were shut in a house which was filled with smoke to disperse the evil spirit. These barbarous customs and the practice of eating the flesh of their dead enemies have been almost entirely stamped out by the Dutch authorities. The filing of their teeth, a most painful ordeal, is still common and is done to enhance their beauty, which the Western eye fails to appreciate.

These people are for the most part pagans, worshiping numerous spirits in nature. Perhaps a fifth of them profess Mohammedanism, and there is a small proportion of nominal Christians, converts of recent years.

In connection with Christian missions, the Dutch authorities have assigned exclusive territories to the Roman Catholics and to the different Protestant bodies where they can carry on their work free from collision and the complications of duplication. At Ambarita, a small village on the island of Samosir, a German Lutheran missionary and his wife, in the short period of twelve years, have transformed a typically filthy native *kampong* into a model of cleanliness with a church, a school, a hospital, and many substantial wooden houses.

On the road to Balige we passed hundreds of natives going to their work in the fields or to market carrying pigs in slings, bearing eggs or vegetables in baskets on their heads, or leading dogs. This village lies on the extreme southern shore of Lake Toba and is an interesting place in which to spend several days. One can visit Wilhelmina Falls, said to be the third largest cataract in the world, and Hoetagindjang, a mountain promontory four thousand five hundred feet in elevation from which a magnificent view of the lake is obtained. When motoring to Hoetagindjang, we passed a solid procession of natives. These fierce people, who fight continually with one another, threw stones and spat at us. The night before our arrival, a Germany missionary was stabbed by a Batak because he refused to allow two lepers to marry.

At Balige we met Mr. Popta, a Dutch planter temporarily engaged in managing a hotel. He had been in Suma-

tra sixteen years and had explored it east and west and north and south, having crossed the island at different places no less than eight times in search of concessions for coffee and rubber. He informed me that in all his travels he had never seen a tiger, although this animal is known to thrive in Sumatra.

Beyond Balige lie the Pandang Highlands, the district in which live a million Menangkabaus, a tribe resembling in many respects the Bataks of the Lake Toba region. On the coast below is situated Padang, the chief seaport of Western Sumatra.

From Balige we crossed to Haranggal at the other end of Lake Toba. We started at seven in the morning at the alarming speed of five miles an hour, and arrived at five in the afternoon, after having been confined the full ten hours on board an ancient twin-screw launch with its ignorant Batak crew. At Haranggal we were met by a curious and rather hostile crowd of natives who saw us well on our way out of the village. We were now on the north side of the lake and were bound for Brastagi.

The Karo Bataks, who inhabit the region of the plateau north of Lake Toba, are a more advanced and industrious tribe than the Toba Bataks. Their villages are much larger and cleaner, and their dwellings more substantial and ornate, having double roofs crowned with many quaint pinnacles and bullock heads. They cultivate potatoes, corn, and other vegetables, do metal work, weave, and make crude jewelry.

The *kampong* of Kebon Djake is a picturesque example of Karo Batak civilization. One approaches the village gate through a bamboo grove. In the foreground stands

the large communal house in which the men hold their meetings, where the native entertainments take place, and where the relics of the *kampong* are stored. In the center one sees the pigeon house and the *goedang*, or rice granary. Groups of shirtless women are busily weaving or pounding corn; naked children run about; pigs, dogs, and chickens congregate in the rubbish heaps. Many people are drifting in from market, and what a somber pageant they present in their garb of indigo with which they have dyed themselves, as their hands testify! The ears of the women are penetrated by huge horizontal silver earrings, six or eight inches in length and weighing possibly half a pound, which are attached to their quaintly-folded pad-like head coverings.

We spent several days at Brastagi in a Dutch hotel which was sufficiently comfortable and luxurious for the most exacting tourist. The tennis courts, golf courses, and the fresh mountain air attract planters and Medan merchants and their families. The hotel is famous for its delicious coffee, a secret formula of the proprietor, so he informed me when I inquired how it was made. I believe, however, that his secret lay in the mixture of whipped cream and an extract which was served with the coffee. As a crowning touch of luxury, a phonograph in the lounge persistently yawned *Yes, We Have No Bananas*.

Brastagi nestles in the hills close by the semi-active volcano, Sabajak, which towers above a tropical forest infested by myriads of screeching and chattering monkeys, audible even on the hotel veranda. Perhaps the most interesting sight in Brastagi is the native market. Here hundreds of Bataks gather to sell their wares, and

one has the opportunity of observing them congregated before one for intensive study. In the early hours of the morning they come from all sections of the surrounding country, with their produce on their heads and their babies on their hips, to spend the entire day bickering and bartering with one another. Native-made cloth, tropical fruits, unwholesome-looking meat, trinkets, and crudely manufactured articles of many kinds are on display. Important features of the gathering are the restaurant stalls where the people eat their filthy prog with their indigo-soiled and otherwise unclean hands.

From Brastagi we descended to Medan on the plain below, and from Belawan-Deli sailed for Penang on the *S.S. Kopah*, a little eight-hundred-ton craft with accommodations for ten first-class passengers. On this voyage we had one fellow traveller, not to mention several hundred pigs stowed within disconcerting proximity of the mess table!

Sumatra has not yet been contaminated, for during our entire sojourn we did not see a single tourist.





CHAPTER XVI

BRITAIN'S ENCHANTED ISLES

THE island of Hongkong, the place of “sweet lagoons,” is a gem among the colonial possessions of Great Britain. But little more than a barren waste in 1843 when it was ceded to England, it is today a touch of Paradise on earth. Its thirty-two square miles of granite mountains are covered with a luxurious growth of semi-tropical trees and plants, and a paved automobile road, as good as any American highway, encircles the island. One can make this trip in about three hours. A high-powered car climbs the almost perpendicular streets, winding its way among the sturdy Western buildings which thickly stud the hillsides, and reaches the wooded country high above the water’s edge. The road is a wonderful example of engineering construction and conducts the visitor through a scene of which there are few parallels to be found anywhere. Beautiful isles dot the deep blue sea, and picturesque bays and inlets indent the shore line at every turn in the highway. Native fishing villages lie at intervals along the coast where fleets of Chinese junks congregate in quaint groups. The traveller stops at Repulse Bay for lunch in a modern hotel and takes a dip at any time of the year in the inviting waters of the little cove formed by two promontories, verdant with sub-tropical shrubs. It is a scene of which the coast of Italy may justly be envious.

The road continues around the island and leads the visitor through the district of the sugar refineries, factories, and ship-building plants of Hongkong. One sees the race course crowded in between two mountain sides and the golf links with its fairways literally up hill and down dale.

The fame of Hongkong as a place somewhere along the coast of southern China is reasonably established, but how many persons have ever heard of the city of Victoria, the capital and port of the island? Hongkong is the designation usually applied to the metropolis, however, even by the permanent residents, and the name of Britain's fair queen is neglected and almost entirely forgotten in this connection. Today Victoria is a modern city with an approximate population of six hundred thousand people, all of whom are Chinese with the exception of a few thousand Britishers and a handful of Europeans. The American colony is hardly a hundred persons. The city is built on the steep sides of the island mountain which has an elevation of two thousand feet. The business section and Chinese quarters skirt the shore, while the private residences cluster up the hillsides to the Peak which is reached by an incline railway. Rickshas on the lower streets and sedan chairs on the slopes are the chief means of conveyance. It is a remarkable fact to contemplate that all the building materials for the thousands of edifices of the city have been carried up the hillsides upon the shoulders of male and female coolies.

Hongkong is a pleasant place in which to live and is one of the most healthful communities in the Far East. It is one of the few cities in the Orient where the water is reasonably pure, where one can drink milk with assurance of its wholesomeness, and where one can eat green vegetables with a reasonable degree of confidence. The British authorities have made ample provision for safeguarding these necessities from pollution.

On our voyage to Singapore, we were humiliated but

nevertheless amused by the antics of two of our compatriots. The passengers in the dining saloon were all disturbed the first night out by the entrance of an intoxicated young American who unceremoniously seated himself at the captain's table. He boisterously aired his private affairs, explaining the intimate details of his business and informing his bored neighbors of the amount of wealth he possessed and how much he intended to spend on his trip. He ordered champagne and offered the wine to the captain and diners at his table, none of whom accepted his hospitality. Later in the evening he fell asleep in the smoking room with eight hundred dollars in American bank notes clutched in his hands. In this condition he was an easy victim for a thief, so the purser and one of the passengers took his money, counted it, and placed it in safe-keeping until morning. The following day the notes were turned over to their owner who, instead of expressing gratitude, insisted that the amount was one hundred dollars short and accused his benefactors of misappropriating them. He should have been thankful that he hadn't been relieved of the entire amount by some deck pirate. The next day he was assigned a seat in a remote corner of the dining saloon.

I was inclined to sympathize with the young American, thinking that perhaps his foot had slipped and that he had inadvertently imbibed too freely. However, I finally came to the conclusion that he was an ass, drunk or sober. One afternoon, the captain was on the upper deck talking to two ladies while the American was nearby engaged in a discussion with a fellow passenger about the date line in the Pacific Ocean.

"Say, Cap, which way are we going, east or west?" he ill-manneredly called to the skipper. The captain ignored him, but he repeated his bold request.

"You shouldn't ask such foolish questions," the master of the ship finally replied, after excusing himself to the ladies.

"Why?" the American persisted.

"We throw passengers overboard who are too inquisitive," was the skipper's sarcastic response.

"How many have you thrown over to date?" the young fellow inquired in a flash of brilliancy for him.

The captain then assumed a serious expression and relieved himself of all the technical terms of navigation that he could muster, and gave the young inquirer a dissertation of jumbled nonsense on the subject of the date line and direction in which the ship was going.

The American was a rude upstart, but the captain was a surly Scotchman. His gruff and sullen manner was known about the ship and a couple of his countrywomen, scarcely out of their teens, took delight in tormenting him.

"Good morning, Captain," they would cheerfully greet him.

"I said 'Good morning' to you once, that is sufficient," he would snap.

"You look seasick, Captain," was the way they hailed him one morning, and "We see that your ship is running out of her course," was another effort to tantalize him. The old man had been able to handle the young American, but he was powerless in the face of these jabs from the attractive Highland lassies.

The night before our arrival in Singapore was New

Year's Eve, and there was much gaiety and merriment on board. Another American entertained us. In an effort to drown his displeasure at the fact that the orchestra was playing for a dance of the second-cabin passengers while those of the first-class were left to amuse themselves, and to ingratiate himself with the nobility aboard, he bought champagne for everyone on deck. I suspected the source of the hospitality, and when a steward offered to serve me, my inclination was to drink a dozen bottles.

Singapore is perhaps the most valuable island possession of Great Britain, for it occupies the commanding position in the center of the highway leading from India to China. Sir Stamford Raffles, who laid claim to it in 1818, died an unpopular man in England for selecting such a remote island as a port and base. He has long since been vindicated for his wisdom, and a large monument to his memory adorns a square in the city. It is regarded as a distinction to have his name associated with the institutions of Singapore.

How farsighted some of the British colonists were! They set aside, in the choicest part of the city along the ocean front, several hundred acres of land which today are devoted to a park and recreation grounds. An old English church picturesquely reposes in the center of this fifty-acre park, and gardens, football and cricket fields, and tennis courts extend the length of the bund. A beautiful esplanade with driveway and footpath runs along the water's edge.

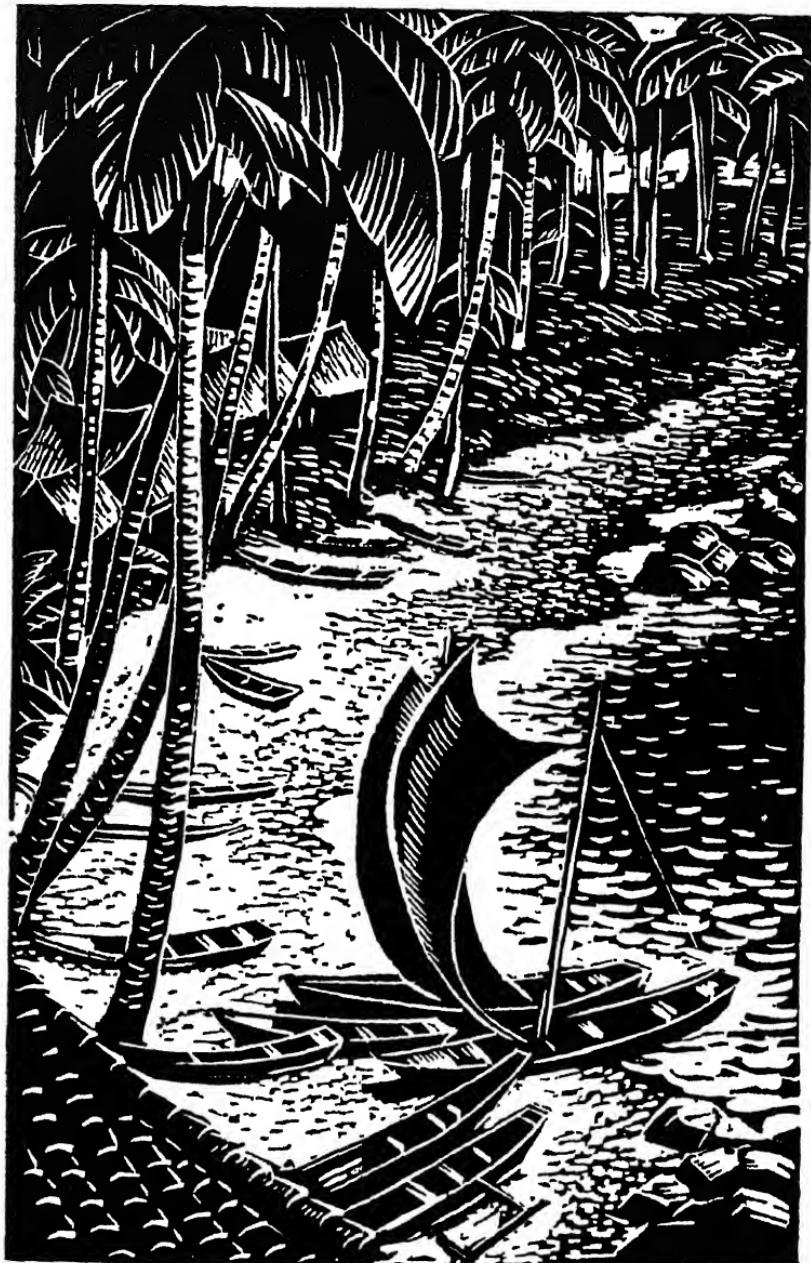
The island of Singapore is thickly wooded with cocoanut groves and other tropical foliage and is well provided with excellent roads for motor tours. The city is the cross-

roads of the East, for here it is that representatives of all the nations of the Orient are found in abundance. John Chinaman is the merchant of the place, and the Indian and the Malay are the laborers. Singhalese and Tamils from Ceylon and India, Malays from the Straits Settlements, Chinese from the north, Javanese from the south, and countless other races mingle on its streets.

Probably no city in the world presents such a diversity of colors, customs, and costumes. Each nationality is free to go its own way within large and reasonable limits, and this is one of the secrets of Britain's success as a colonial power. She makes no effort to twist her millions of Oriental subjects into Englishmen, but allows them to pursue their own lives unmolested.

A Singhalese can wander about the streets of Singapore clad in a costume no larger than a paper napkin, and not a single policeman will disturb him. If an Englishman did the same thing, he would immediately be arrested. Little black children scamper about arrayed in nothing but nature's sun-burned garments, but the youngsters of the white residents are garbed according to Western customs. The American authorities in the Philippines prohibit the appearance of any native on the streets of Manila unless his anatomy is entirely covered. A Broadway business suit is the preferable attire.

Prince of Wales Island—or Pulo Penang, meaning “Betel Nut Island”—is situated at the mouth of the Strait of Malacca. It was acquired by the East India Company in 1786 and by them turned over to the British Empire. Its chief city is Georgetown but, like Victoria in Hong-kong, one seldom hears it mentioned. Both island and



metropolis are generally referred to and known as Penang.

It is a port of call for steamship lines from Europe to the Orient and, although the seat of the government for the Eastern Straits Settlements is located here, Penang has lagged behind its rival, Singapore, which is more advantageously situated. The population of the island is over three hundred thousand and includes Malays, Chinese, Indians, Siamese, Burmans, and a sprinkling of Europeans, chiefly British.

The climate is tropical but healthful, a sea breeze blowing every day and rain falling during nearly all the months of the year. The British therefore find it a comfortable colony in which to live and, with the advantages of good automobile roads, clubs, and the mountain peak, pursue an outdoor existence of reasonable ease. The evenings are pleasant, and we found it an agreeable pastime to sit under the tropical stars on the hotel lawn at the water's edge listening to the waves dashing against the rocks and hearing the word *boy* coming through the night air from a score of tables. *Boy, boy, boy*, that familiar call of the East, in its different intonations, has a fascination which one cannot escape, if one so desires.

The British community of Penang has the reputation among its rivals in the Straits Settlements of being exclusive and inclined to snobbery. My wife and I landed on the shores of the island not knowing a single one of its inhabitants. A fellow-passenger who disembarked at the same time had received visitor's cards to a number of the colony's clubs and he asked us on many occasions to accompany him, although he realized that he was perhaps stretching the privilege extended to him by a friend who

was absent on business. However, as long as our companion was agreeable, we were; and we accepted this vicarious hospitality without question. He was also a stranger in Penang, so the three of us kept closely together and aloof as we went daily to the Swimming Club for a dip in the ocean. The British members gazed at us rather coldly as we sat at a table drinking tea after our plunge, and were apparently unable to account for us. We learned later that we were known among the members of the colony as the "Mysterious Trio."

What a wonderful string of possessions Britain has along the highway from the Pacific to the Atlantic: Hong-kong, Singapore, Penang, Ceylon, Malta, and Gibraltar, not to mention her control of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal!

Ceylon, the fourth in this chain, is situated near the toe of India and is considered by many travellers to be the most beautiful island in the world. It is shaped like a pear, but the natives picturesquely compare it to a pearl. Its mountains and valleys are covered with a heavy mantle of luxuriant tropical vegetation from the shore line to Pedrotellagalla, the highest peak, with an elevation of eight thousand two hundred and eighty feet.

The island is twice the size of the state of Maryland. Colombo, its capital and largest city, is about as large as Toledo, Ohio. Ceylon has a population of approximately four and a half million people comprised almost entirely of jet black Singhalese and Tamils. It has about eight hundred miles of railways and produces one-sixth of the world's tea besides large quantities of rice, coffee, cinna-

mon, cocoanuts, vanilla, and tobacco. Its forests yield ebony and satinwood.

Ceylon has been under the rule of many masters. The Yakkhos, the aboriginal inhabitants, were subdued by an Indian prince about five hundred years before the Christian Era. The island was ruled by the dynasty he established for a period of eight centuries and was governed by natives. Malabars, or Tamils, invaded the island in 1500 and ruled until a few years later when the Portuguese landed and took control. The Dutch next appeared on the scene and drove the Portuguese away. It was during the European War, after the French Revolution, that Ceylon came into the possession of Great Britain. A treaty annexing the entire territory to the British Crown was concluded in 1802. By this agreement England released her claims in Java to the Dutch in exchange for unrestricted control in Ceylon.

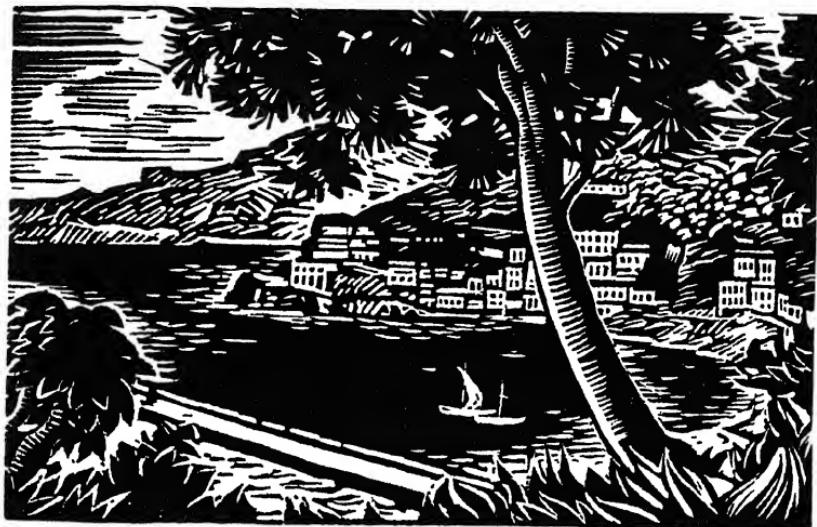
The island is a valuable asset to Britain chiefly on account of its proximity to India. With all its beauty and charm, it is hardly a fit place, especially on the coast, as a fixed habitation for white men. In fact the entire tropical belt, as many foreign residents have informed me, is an undesirable part of the world for a permanent home for northern races. Relief from the intense heat can be obtained by seeking refuge in the mountain resorts, but the climate will finally wear down the most robust constitution. The haggard, pale faces of the resident foreigners, especially the women, tell the tale.

Colombo is the point at which all steamers from the East Indies and the Orient converge. In consequence,

hardly a day passes that its streets are not lined with tourists. The natives well know the species, and every person, from the most humble coolie to the opulent proprietor of the leading hotel, is a trained expert at separating the traveller from his money. At every turn, we were confronted by vendors. They accosted us at the pier, on the streets, and in the hotels with displays of postal cards, ivory bric-a-brac, ornamental jewelry, rugs, lace, embroidered fabrics, wooden elephants, and real live mongooses. What use I could make of a mongoose, I do not know.

From Colombo we crossed the Indian Ocean and sailed through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean. Our steamer had a full list of several hundred passengers, all of whom, with the exception of half a dozen tourists, were Britishers on furlough from the tropics, China, and Japan. We had a delightful journey, but my heart sank as I realized that I was leaving the mysterious East with its millions of strange peoples, its unfathomable spirit, and its indescribable charm. Europe is within the realm of an American's understanding. The Orient remains a riddle.





CHAPTER XVII

ECONOMY IN EUROPE

IT IS difficult to avoid becoming a mere tourist in Europe when one is simply on a sight-seeing expedition—for the Old World is an experienced hand and has so successfully oiled and greased its highways and byways and its nooks and niches that the traveller has no choice other than to settle in a groove and follow the well-worn track. However, the avoidance of complete capitulation to custom is possible by adopting a policy of economy and eagerly pursuing this course to its goal. In this way one follows the route of the small second-class hotels and evades the conventional and beaten path paved with the coins of affluent and sometimes overbearing American tourists.

It is a disagreeable fact, but none-the-less true, that my compatriot in Europe is an unpopular guest who is tolerated as a profitable nuisance. He is often shunned by his more refined and sensitive fellow-countryman, as any dignified American who has been abroad can testify. Is this unpopularity due to his thoughtlessness and, perhaps, poor manners at times, or to his conspicuousness when out of his natural environment? Possibly it may be accounted for by our youth and inexperience as a nation.

One who takes pride in his country and desires her to place her best foot forward can not fail to be both disconcerted and humiliated when he sees tourists from the States bluster into a quiet restaurant, talking as if all the members of their party were deaf; hears them complain about the food to the annoyance of persons at the adjoining tables; listens to their chatter about how much better everything is done in their own home town than it is in any European city, or is bored by a sonorously

read letter relating in detail the personal affairs of some upstart in the Middle West.

I have witnessed many such painful incidents in the hotels and restaurants of nearly every capital and large city in Europe. One ignorant and provincial denizen of some place west of the Mississippi actually had the impudence to write to one of the American newspapers abroad complaining about the absence of bootblack stands in Paris and fully describing, to the detriment of the French metropolis, the existence of shoe-shining parlors and other symptoms of civilization in his particular town in the United States!

No nation, however, has a monopoly of all the vices. A friend of mine, when riding from Calais to Paris, desired some information upon approaching his destination.

A Frenchman sat opposite him engrossed in an English book, so my friend inquired, "Pardon me, do you speak English?"

"Yes, I do, but I prefer to read," was the Frenchman's abrupt reply as he dug his face deeper into the volume.

How unfortunately true is Bernard Shaw's remark: "If you want to see how selfish people are, and how skin-deep fashionable politeness is, take a voyage."

From the Far East we came directly through to Marseilles, where we put up at a modest hotel in which we obtained spacious quarters for the sum of two dollars per day for the two of us. After roughly outlining an itinerary, we departed for Nice, Mentone and Monte Carlo, Genoa, Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan, Lugano, and finally Brussels. This trip required nearly four weeks and included first-class travel by train, small economical hotels with

three meals a day, vehicles and personal guides when needed, and all tips in Italy. The cost was only one hundred and fifty dollars apiece.

I admit this is fast travelling. Our visit in Italy was far too short for that country with its priceless fund of historical relics, art treasures, and present-day interests. It is excusable, perhaps, when one considers that this was my third sojourn in Italy. Circumstances, however, precluded a longer stay.

On this trip we had only one day to devote to the Vatican and, as we were entering this storehouse of art and tradition, I remarked to our guide that we would break the world's record for speed in dashing through it. He assured me, however, that our visit was far from the shortest. The previous year he had conducted an American about Rome.

On approaching the Vatican, his charge inquired most curtly, "What's this place?"

"The Vatican, the residence of the Pope. It contains the famous Sistine Chapel and many galleries with wonderful pictures, tapestries, and sculpture," was the guide's reply.

The American snapped out his watch and looked at the time.

"I have twenty minutes for this place," he said as he pushed his way through the turnstile.

Long before the day of complexes, Dr. Johnson said, "A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority." If this statement is true, this hustling American should be psycho-analytically at ease.

Museums and galleries are such important parts of the fund of treasure of Italy and of all countries in Europe

that one would require a year at least to obtain even a superficial knowledge of them. Perhaps the speedy American decided practically to eliminate the Vatican for this reason. Unless one is making a study of some particular relics of the past or is concentrating all his energies upon art, a reasonable inspection of such institutions is sufficient. I do not know anything so fatiguing and futile as a tour in a museum where one tries to absorb information about everything from a petrified codfish to an Ethiopian mummy, and generally ends up by remembering nothing at all. Nor do I consider it profitable to spend an afternoon in a gallery where a hall of paintings looks like the Milky Way. A single masterpiece in a room by itself is worth a hundred in a heap. Not until directors of galleries cease hanging pictures like bananas—in a bunch—will I, for one, be able to derive full enjoyment from them.

En route to Lugano, my wife and I made the acquaintance of an English parson who shared the compartment with us. When the train arrived at Chiasso, on the Italian-Swiss border, thinking that we had a stop of an hour, he went to a barber shop to get a shave. He had only been gone about ten minutes when our train pulled out of the station and started on its way, leaving the Englishman behind and separating him from his luggage. He had forgotten to change his watch. I didn't know his name nor he mine. I informed the conductor of what had happened and, with his approval, assumed the responsibility of delivering the baggage to its owner, an assumption that wouldn't have been allowed in America. On arrival at Lugano, where we had planned to spend a few days, I ascertained from the station master the time of the next



incoming train from Italy. It was due in a couple of hours, and I met it. The parson was on board, and I turned over his bags. He was most grateful and lavish in his praise, saying that I was a true Christian and had done a thoroughly Christian act. I called it, however, nothing but common decency.

In Paris, we were located in a little hotel in the very heart of the city where the price for the two of us was a dollar and a quarter per day. Within a few blocks of our modest lodging, opulent tourists were paying the equivalent of ten and twelve dollars for their accommodations in the leading hotels. We ate at small restaurants where good food was cheap, rather than at the marble and crystal palaces which cater to the foreigner at exorbitant prices.

On the Belgian and French trains, we travelled second-class at a reduction of twenty-five per cent in fare and came in contact with the people of the countries instead of with routine tourists.

At Ypres, I wanted to buy through tickets to return to Paris for my wife and myself, but was only able to obtain them as far as Courtrai, about an hour's ride from our starting point. We had no time at Courtrai to purchase tickets for the rest of the journey, for we were ten minutes late and the Paris train on the adjoining track was already slowly moving away. I hustled our half dozen suit-cases out of the compartment, but there wasn't a porter in sight to lend assistance. I was determined to make the train, and there was not a second to lose. I commandeered the first man I saw. He was a stray engine-wiper. The two of us jammed the luggage on the moving train. For a second I lost sight of my wife and I thought that I was confronted

with the alternative of deserting her or the luggage. The engine-wiper stood on the step of the coach and apprehensively waited for a tip. I hurriedly fumbled through my clothes and dumped the contents of my waistcoat pocket into his hands. To this day, I don't know whether I gave him a couple of centimes or several hundred francs.

The hectic journey had just begun. In half an hour we arrived at another station in Belgium and again only had a few seconds in which to change. There was another famine of porters, and I pressed a passenger into service. He was a Frenchman. The train started to move just as we climbed aboard, and we continued on our way without tickets.

We arrived at Tourcoing in France and had to pass the customs. I turned the luggage and my wife, who didn't speak a word of French, over to the Frenchman who didn't understand a syllable of English, while I rushed ahead to purchase tickets. I brushed past the customs official at the gate. He called to me to come back, but I paid no attention to him. I asked the station agent for two second-class tickets to Paris. They cost one hundred and three French francs. I discovered I had only a hundred of French currency. In order to avoid delay and insure catching the train, I gave him without argument ten Belgian francs to cover the extra amount.

I rushed back to the customs to find my wife in trouble. A French official had ripped everything out of my suitcases. He had them sprawled all over the counters and, with excited gesticulations, was demanding duty on a pair of shoes which he had found in one of my bags. I didn't have money with which to make the payment, nor did I

have time to waste, for the train for Paris was about to steam out of the station. The shoes were new in appearance, I hastily explained, but I had purchased them in America and had taken them around the world with me but hadn't worn them at all, every word of which was true. The whole matter was about as complicated as a wooden toothpick, but the customs agent appeared most perplexed. Without waiting for him to come to a decision, the patient Frenchman, my wife, and I stuffed my belongings into my bags, and sped trackward. Breathlessly, we scrambled into a rolling railway carriage and piled our luggage in the corridor.

We were now on a direct train to Paris, we had our tickets to our destination, and all tips along the route had been paid. There is always a limit to such speed and endurance, and I believe if we had had another change to make, I would have lost baggage, Frenchman, and wife. The two latter would have struck.

In England we struck the happy medium of economy, between unnecessary luxury on the one hand and submerged vagabondage on the other. This can be done with ease by anyone who is familiar with the country and knows the ropes. At Liverpool we embarked on an intermediate steamer and crossed the Atlantic for just one half the cost of that of the larger liners which transport the bulk of the traffic.

Our ship had every convenience the most fastidious traveller could desire; even a sharper was on board, although high gambling stakes were wanting. The passengers were a most reserved company, and the voyage was a model of conventionality in comparison with a crossing

I made years before in the steerage with two thousand emigrants.

On that occasion I had occupied a cabin with seven British laborers who were leaving England for the first time. Having just come on board, I was throwing my bag into my bunk when one of my ship mates arrived. He was a young cockney who saluted me with a beaming smile.

“Are you bunking in here?” he inquired.

“Yes,” was my response.

“What is your name?” was his next question.

“Fletcher,” I replied.

“I mean your first name,” he persisted.

“Alfred,” I coldly told him.

I don’t know his name to this day, but he called me “Alf” the entire trip!

The present journey was drawing to a close. After years of zigzagging over Europe and Asia, I had girdled the globe for the second time and, on this trip, had travelled more than fifty thousand miles.





CHAPTER XVIII

BACK HOME

THE Statue of Liberty stood motionless as I returned to the land of my adoption after an almost uninterrupted absence of eight years. During this period she had sanctioned the declaration of war by the United States against the Central Powers; she had bade Godspeed to the millions of lads as they departed on their journey across the sea, and she had extended her welcome to those who had returned. She had also witnessed many changes in the land over which she keeps a protecting hand . . . but a full discussion of these changes would furnish material for many volumes!

